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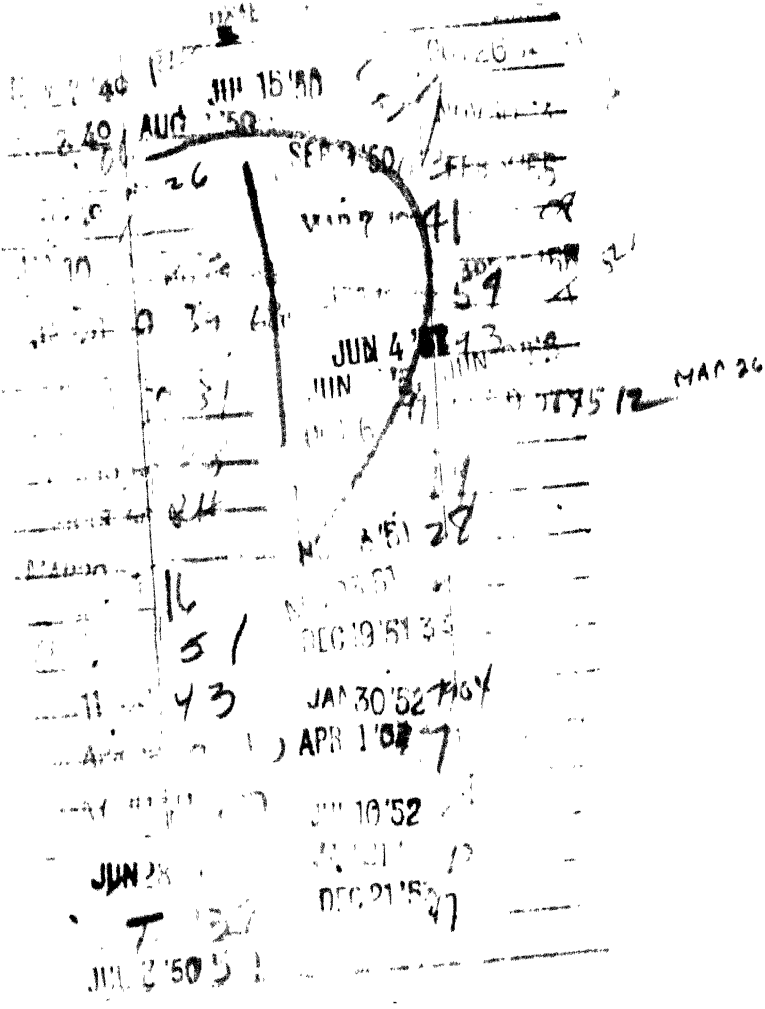

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ELLIOTT ARNOLD

Deep in My Heart

A Story Based on the Life of
SIGMUND ROMBERG

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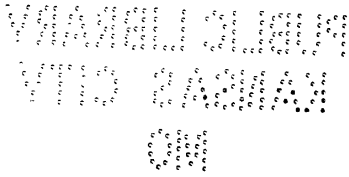

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I

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To all those who love

the music of Sigmund Romberg

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"Golden Days, in the sunshine of our youth,
Golden Days, full of innocence and full of truth . . ."

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"To the inn we're marching,
For our throats are parching,
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In the month of May. . . ."

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I have a dream of you. . . ."

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This time means goodbye, dear. . . ."
"Calm all your fears and dry all your tears,
Love will remain when all else shall wane,
Guiding me through the years,
Auf Wiedersehen, Auf Wiedersehen. . . ."

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Will you love me ever?
Will you remember this day
When we were happy in May?"

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When I grow too old to dream,
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Deep in My Heart

Prologue

THE tragic notes of taps first came from the Festung and although the bugler announced them clearly he seemed to be playing a great distance away. Even to those who were close to the bugler it was as though the sounds came from far away.

When the final notes slipped into the night a bugler in the Unterstadt repeated the mournful dirge and when he was finished a third bugler in the Oberstadt had his say. While the buglers were playing in the different sections of Osiek nothing could be heard but their somber tones and no matter where people listened it was always as though the sounds came from somewhere else.

Upon the last sounds of the last bugler the military band began to play in the Festung. Presently the band appeared in the Oberstadt, leading the procession.

First to be seen was a confusion of twinkling, flaming eyes, the flickering torches of the light-bearers who formed the van and flanks. Then as the procession neared, figures emerged from the flaming lights, the band was created in the light and the flames from the flambeaux struck again and again as though with fiery whips at the shining instruments. A slight wind rose and in the vagaries of the many lights the faces of the musicians now ap-

peared, now slipped into a half-darkness, and from time to time only the instruments themselves caught the light and it was as though trumpets and horns and cornets were drifting alone in the air.

Behind the musicians followed the carriages of the officers and their ladies drawn by horses whose stately pace followed the fiery rhythm of the music, whose clumping hooves beat a relentless obbligato, as though they were scores of crackling drums spelling out the beating of the larger drums. The stiff, rigid faces of the officers were thrown into stony relief by the glittering medals, decorations, and ornaments that spread lights across their uniforms; next to the officers the ladies appeared helplessly feminine and their necklaces, bracelets, rings, brooches, and tiaras picked up the torch lights and converted them into endless reflections.

Behind the carriages marched the soldiers. Their tread was formal. Their backs were iron. Their faces were almost inhuman in solemnity.

From the many sounds in this almost medieval scene one sound was compounded: it was made of music, pounding of hooves, tramp of feet, creaking of leather, rolling of wheels. And if memory can be said to have a sound, that was there too.

The boy stood as though transfixed. He gripped his father's hand and stared at the spectacle. He felt as though his chest were one of the huge drums that passed and his heart were beating against it. His father leaned down. "This is something to remember, Sigmund," he said. "The tattoo is for an old battle in Schleswig-Holstein. It was not a very important battle and is probably forgotten everywhere else in the world. Here, in Osiek, it is remembered on each anniversary. Those who died are being well honored."

The last of the marching men passed by and now the music was faint in the distance and the torches had almost disappeared like

vanishing fireflies and then there was nothing in the street, nothing at all, a vacuum, as though the procession had drawn the air away with it.

The boy felt suddenly exhausted; it was as though he had walked with the soldiers; as though he had carried each instrument. He sighed and felt a limpness he had never known before.

"Osiek has welcomed you imperially," his father said. "Not every boy is greeted by an imperial tattoo when he comes to a strange city to start school."

The boy walked between his parents as though in a dream. He had looked through a window into a new world and his head ached with the experience. Later, in bed, in a strange house for the first time in his life, the pain became a sweetness. He could not sleep. He could not forget the sound of the music.

I

In the year 1886 Adam Romberg completed a leisurely journey around the world and then returned to his family's home in the Hungarian community of Nagy Kaniza, a town which today lies on the border between Hungary and Yugoslavia. The grand tour marked the final stage in the education of a cultivated and worldly gentleman of that time, and now Adam Romberg, at the age of 42, was prepared to settle down.

The son of Dr. Sigmund Romberg, a prominent and successful medical practitioner in Nagy Kaniza who had achieved a certain renown for the part he had played in the hallowed Hungarian revolution of Franz Kossuth in 1848, and related to the wealthy Baron Gutmann of Vienna, Adam Romberg represented a kind of catholic culture that was rapidly disappearing. He spoke and wrote the languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire —German, Italian, Serbian, and Hungarian—and was proficient in French and English as well. He was an accomplished amateur pianist, had composed a few pleasant pieces of music, and numbered among his friends many poets, painters, and musicians in his own and other communities. He was a connoisseur of food, both Viennese and French, of wines and of im-

ported cigars. He was an amiable, affable, and easy-going man, in perfect adjustment to the unhurried mood of his time.

Shortly after his return he had occasion to make a trip to Trieste, then a part of the vast, sprawled Habsburg Empire, and while in the colorful seaport city he met and fell in love with a young lady named Clara Fells and his bachelor days were ended. Miss Fells was a poet and short-story writer of some distinction and was eighteen years junior to Adam. The couple were married and settled in Nagy Kaniza where, a year later, on July 29, 1887, their first child, a son, was born. They named him Sigmund, after Adam's father.

With his new responsibilities of marriage and family, Adam Romberg looked around for a position. He did not have to seek far. Because of his knowledge of languages, his experiences as a traveler, and his easy manner in dealing with all kinds of persons, his relative Baron Gutmann offered him the post of commercial director of the Gutmann enterprises in the little Hungarian village of Belisce on the Drau River. In Belisce the Gutmanns operated a sawmill and a factory for the manufacture of tannin, products from which were shipped from Belisce to many parts of the Empire and to foreign countries as well.

In 1888 Adam and Clara Romberg and their son moved to Belisce and there started a pleasant and congenial existence. Adam's manners popularized him with the executives and workers both. Mrs. Romberg, under the name of Clara Berg, continued her writing, and poems and short stories from her pen appeared regularly in such journals as the *Neue Freie Presse* and the *Wiener Tageblatt* in Vienna. Social life in Belisce became divided between the Romberg home and the local dwelling of the Gutmanns nearby. Since the Gutmanns occupied their chateau only occasionally, the Romberg home was considered the artistic salon of Belisce, becoming a meetingplace for artists in many fields. Small musical groups were organized by Adam Romberg,

who played piano in them. Local poets recited their poems and local painters displayed their pictures in the Romberg home. Due to the wide friendships of both Adam and Clara Romberg, visitors from other parts of Europe frequently stayed with them, bringing to the secluded life some of the flavors of Vienna, Paris, Budapest, Prague, and other great cities.

Three years after their arrival in Belisce a second son, Hugo, was born, and thereafter the two boys grew up and were educated in a calm and leisurely manner. It was a happy family. Adam was a man of middle height who wore long mustaches. He was meticulous about his appearance as he was about everything else. He was proud of his slender, fine hands and kept his nails painstakingly manicured. Clara was a dark-blonde whose hair, when undone, reached to her waist; when put up it was worn in thick braids around her head. She was slender, quiet-voiced, and had a soft luminous voice which reflected the sentimental nature that inspired her writings.

2.

On an evening in August of 1897, Adam Romberg slowly walked to his home, refreshed after a rubdown and swim in the Turkish bath the Gutmanns maintained in Belisce. The day had been hot and now the evening cool was pleasant as he strolled through the streets, nodding his head and greeting acquaintances he passed. As he approached his home his brow furrowed slightly. A decision had to be made that evening which would cause a change in the even, agreeable course of existence.

He sighed softly and entered his home. He hung up his hat and placed his walking stick in its container and then he walked into the living room and greeted his wife. He glanced at the frame on which she was working a pattern in embroidery and complimented her on her work. Then he settled himself in his deep

chair and opened his newspaper. He lit a cigar with the care he gave to everything he did, and drew in the smoke with satisfaction. Mrs. Romberg watched him fondly and then caught his eye. They smiled to each other and then she resumed her work. Presently he raised his eyes from the newspaper and asked, "Where are the children? The house seems very quiet."

"Hugo is in his room studying. Sigmund isn't home yet."

"He knows it is close to dinner. Where is he?"

"The maid said she saw him at the railroad station."

Mr. Romberg put down the newspaper. "Again? Whatever can the boy see in that little railroad? It seems to me he spends a lot of time at the depot."

Mrs. Romberg set her embroidery aside. "We've been wondering about a career for the boy. Maybe he is suggesting it himself."

Adam Romberg looked puzzled. "Career? What do you mean? As a locomotive engineer?"

She laughed softly. "No. But if he has an interest in mechanical things—perhaps an engineer."

Her husband removed the cigar from his mouth and studied it for a moment. "There may be something in what you say, my dear. Perhaps the boy does have some inclination along that line. It's not a bad profession, engineer. The world is moving in that direction, toward mechanical things. There's a future in that. And we do have to come to a decision soon, tonight if possible. It's August, you know, and he'll have to start in in some school next month." He saw the cloud pass over his wife's face and he went to her immediately. "Now, Clara," he said gently. "Boys will grow up, you know. We've talked about all this."

"Oh, I know, Adam," she said. "But he's still so young. He's scarcely past his tenth birthday."

"He has finished all the schooling Belisce can offer," her husband said patiently, with the air of a man who had been through

this before. "We don't want our sons to grow up uneducated."

Mrs. Romberg wiped her eyes. "I know, I know. But it's not easy. Now it's Sigmund. Next it will be Hugo. This house will soon be filled with echoes, Adam."

He raised his head suddenly. "I hear him coming in now."

"Don't say anything until after dinner," Mrs. Romberg said quickly.

Her husband smiled. "You don't have to caution me after all these years. Don't worry, we'll save the discussion until afterward."

Dinner was the pleasant meal that Mrs. Romberg always insisted it be. It was one of the quiet rules with which she managed the household that all matters of discordant nature be postponed until the evening meal was ended.

Sigmund ate his meal silently. He was a slender, light-haired boy. He had a gift for mimicry and often, at family meals, would recount some experience or other, his eyes animated, his face and voice imitating some character or other in the town. Hugo was quieter ordinarily; this night he was the talkative one. His elder brother ate and listened.

Dinner over, the family retired to the living room. Normally, in these quiet, pleasant summer evenings, Adam and Clara would leave the house for a short stroll through the town, going perhaps to the bank of the Drau to watch the stars twinkling on the water. Tonight, however, after lighting his after-dinner cigar, Adam cleared his throat once or twice and then said, "Sigmund."

The boy looked up politely. "Yes, Father?"

Mrs. Romberg cut in instantly. "Your father wants you to play some music with him."

"Music?" Mr. Romberg asked. Then he said, "Of course, some music." He sighed again. "What would you like us to play, Sigmund?"

"Strauss," the boy said eagerly. "A Strauss waltz."

"I thought it would be that," Adam said. "Always Viennese waltzes. Other music has been written, you know." He seated himself before the piano. He placed the unfinished cigar carefully on a small tray and then ran his fingers across the keys.

Sigmund took a violin from its case. His father sounded A and the boy plucked the string. He tuned the other strings and then his father started the introduction and Sigmund joined in the lovely strains of the Emperor Waltz. Mrs. Romberg, successful in having delayed an unpleasantness for a little while, relaxed in satisfaction.

Adam Romberg played well and he listened with pleasure to the music he and his son were producing. Sigmund had started taking violin lessons four years earlier, when he was six. Two years after that he began to study the piano as well. At first he seemed to show little aptitude and less interest in either instrument. His mother used to have to put coins on the piano keys to make him practice. Then, just as he passed his ninth birthday, he suddenly developed a facility with both instruments. It happened all at once. It was the violin he went to first and he handled it with new authority. His mother, who happened to be listening, realized that some line had been crossed.

From that point on his improvement was bewildering. He seemed capable of absorbing almost anything on either instrument. He played the classical music that formed his father's cherished library, but his tastes were not on the printed pages. Left to his own choice he would play waltz music endlessly, improvising new variations as he went along, would switch suddenly to wild gypsy airs. Hearing him his mother felt a vague fear. She felt that the music seemed to hold her son in a grasp. Music was a pleasant pastime and nothing was more pleasant than friendly concerts among friends. But music should be a servant, the way it was a servant for her husband. She had a

feeling, without being able to put it into words, that it was becoming something else altogether with her elder son.

Adam finished with a flourish and then picked up the cigar which he had been careful to puff on occasionally during the impromptu concert. He would never relight a cigar. He rose from the piano and closed it. His son, the violin still tucked under his chin, asked, "Is that all, Father?"

"All for tonight. We have a serious matter to talk about."

Sigmund's eyes fell. Slowly he lowered the violin and replaced it in its case. His father seated himself again in his chair. He pulled on the cigar until the end glowed to his taste and then he said. "Sigmund, your mother and I have been trying to decide a very important matter concerning you. You were graduated from school here in Belisce last spring and now we have to make up our minds where you go next. You must continue your education, of course, and what we have to make up our minds about tonight is just what career to select for you. It's near the end of August and the new school sessions start within a few weeks."

Sigmund seated himself and thought about his father's words. He had known that he would have to go somewhere to continue his schooling but the summer had seemed so long that things like serious planning for a career and choice of school remained very far away.

"In some families," Adam continued, "parents select schools and careers for their children without talking to the children at all. But we don't do things quite that way. Your mother and I would like to hear your own ideas." He smiled at the boy. "Let me tell you a little of the system of education so that you can understand things better. You have completed your grammar-school education and now you must make a choice. If you wish to become a doctor or a lawyer, then you enter a Gymnasium, where you will have to study Latin and Greek, history, science,

and so on, and very little in a mathematical way. On the other hand, a young man who wishes to become an engineer or a scientist enters a Realschule, and in that case he concentrates on mathematics, chemistry, drawing, physics, and things of that nature. Is that clear, so far?"

"Yes, Father."

"Good. Now there is just one more thing to take into consideration. As you may know, we have a law in this country requiring all young men to serve three years in the army when they reach the age of eighteen. There is an exception to this law: young men who complete the eighth grade of high school may take an examination called the Matura and if they pass this examination they need serve only *one* year in the army. And at the end of that year a young man may take still another examination and if he passes that he becomes an officer in the reserve. So, as you can see, it is a great advantage for many reasons for a young man to get a good education. You prepare yourself for a more useful life, to start with, and you give yourself a chance to become an officer in the army instead of a common soldier." Adam looked at the cigar, which now was almost to its last inch. Regretfully, after a final puff, he put it down. "So," he said, "now you understand a little of the importance of the decision we must make. What do you think about all this? Last May when you finished school here I asked you to think about your future. What would you like to do?"

Sigmund shifted in his seat. It was true that when he was graduated the previous May his father had said something about thinking about the future, but, of course, he had forgotten the suggestion promptly. He had never given the matter any serious thought from that moment to this one.

"Come, come, my boy," Adam said. "This is *your* future, you know."

Sigmund swallowed. "I like to play the piano and violin. Maybe I could be a musician."

Mrs. Romberg put her hand to her heart and turned pale. She and her husband exchanged glances, and then Adam said reassuringly. "Of course, it's splendid to be a musician. It is part of the education of any cultivated person to know something about music and to play some instrument if possible. But we are not talking about how you want to spend your leisure. We are trying to decide on your career."

"Why couldn't I make music my career?" Sigmund's eyes sparkled suddenly. He had not thought of it before, but now it seemed the most natural thing in the world. "Why couldn't I just study music? I don't want to be a doctor or a lawyer."

"You mean you want to become a professional musician like a gypsy fiddle-player in a Cafe?" his father asked in astonishment. Then he laughed. "I remember a year or two ago when we went to Osiek you decided that you wanted to become a streetcar conductor. Now it's a gypsy fiddle-player."

"Adam . . ." Clara Romberg said in her quiet voice. Then she spoke to the boy. She spoke calmly although her heart was beating violently. "Sigmund, your father and I want you to have the kind of life that will make you happiest. It is possible, don't you think, that perhaps you are still too young to know what you want to do. Your father and I do not think that becoming a musician, performing in public, is the best career for you. However, we can make some kind of compromise. Let us decide on some more normal profession for the time being. Then you can commence your studies. Later on, when you are a little older, if you still want to become a public entertainer, you can always change. If you gave up your formal education now and studied only for the violin or piano and then later on changed your mind you could never make up all the years you lost."

"Good," Adam said with relief. "Clara, you have put the case

perfectly. So let us decide. What shall it be? Medicine? Law? Engineering? Chemistry? What?"

"It doesn't matter," Sigmund said.

Adam Romberg pursed his lips. He winked at his wife. "Perhaps we can help you," he said. "We are told you spend a great deal of time at the railroad station watching the train come in with lumber from the forests. Is that true?"

Sigmund raised his eyes, startled. "Yes, sir."

"Good. Now we are getting somewhere. Why is that? Do you enjoy watching the locomotive operator? Do you think you might like to study engineering?" Sigmund was scarlet. His father looked at his flushed face. "Ah," he said triumphantly. "It appears that we have uncovered something. Look at the boy, Clara, he is as red as a beet. He does like mechanical things. Good, my boy. There is nothing to be ashamed of in that. That is only a foolish little railroad, good only for its purpose, to haul in lumber for the mill. But it has provided a key. There is an excellent Realschule in Osiek and there you can study all about engineering. You will have to live away from home, but Osiek is only two hours or so away from here and it would not be as though you were off somewhere in Vienna or Budapest. We shall be able to visit each other often. What do you say, then, shall we consider it settled? The Realschule in Osiek and our son starts out on a brilliant career as an engineer."

Sigmund's cheeks were still burning. He wanted only to get out of the room. "Yes, Father."

"I shall go to Osiek tomorrow and make the necessary arrangements," Adam said with satisfaction. Although he spoke to his wife she seemed not to be listening; her eyes were fixed on her son. "There, Clara, it was not so difficult."

Sigmund asked, "May I leave now?"

His father watched him go and then he sighed and relaxed. He selected another cigar from his case. "I'm happy that was settled

so easily," he said. "I think Sigmund has a great deal of sense for a boy his age."

"Do you think it is settled?" his wife asked.

"You heard the boy." He blew out a mouthful of smoke.

She smiled wanly and shook her head. "It is far from settled."

"But he agreed to go to Osiek and study engineering."

"Perhaps you are right, Adam. Only I have the feeling that he is not at all interested in engineering."

3.

When Sigmund reached his room he was relieved to find his brother asleep. He sat on the edge of his bed. He was breathless. He had never before had an important secret from his parents. The railroad station! The locomotive! And because he had gone to the railroad station on and off during the summer he was going to study engineering! Instead of music. He giggled nervously. He wondered if he would ever be able to tell Miklos.

He had wandered down to the little toy depot earlier that summer, on a lazy windless day when he had nothing better to do, and while he stood around idly a train, hauling wood to the factories, chugged into the station. The locomotive came to a noisy stop with a great blast of steam. He backed away quickly. He heard a great roar of laughter. The engineer leaned from his little window. "My animal snorts, hey, boy?" He laughed again. "He sweats. The way you would sweat if you had to pull ten carloads of wood on a hot day like this." Then as he saw the boy still wiping at his face he asked, worried, "I didn't burn you, did I, boy?"

Sigmund shook his head. "No."

"Good," the engineer said heartily. "Perhaps it is too hot a day for a steam bath. Perhaps we can make up for it. What do you say? Would you like to climb aboard and stand next to me while I bring my old girl over to the roundhouse?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good. Get up here then."

Sigmund clambered up into the little locomotive, which now had been detached from the rest of the train. The engineer pulled off a greasy glove and extended a thick peasant's hand gravely. "My name is Miklos, boy," he said. Sigmund gave him his name and then he watched as the engineer began to operate the levers. The locomotive, freed from its burden, capered around a horseshoe curve into a roundhouse. "Stay with me, boy," Miklos said, "while I have a bite of lunch. Then I'll bring you back to the depot."

Miklos took a little box from the floor and opened it. Inside was half a loaf of black bread, a huge onion, a wedge of cheese. He extracted a large knife from his pocket and opened it and then swiftly carved a slice from the bread, cut off a piece of onion, and topped it with a piece of cheese. He held it out.

"No thank you," Sigmund said.

"Come on, come on, boy. Boys your age are always hungry."

Sigmund took the food and began to eat it. Miklos made himself another sandwich. When he was finished, the engineer wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and then looked out of the window. "Are you finished?" he yelled at the men inspecting the locomotive. "Not yet? All right. Take your time, take your time. I'm in no hurry."

Now Miklos reached into his pocket and this time he pulled out a large and battered and very dirty harmonica. "Do you like music, boy?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," Sigmund said.

"Good. Then I will play for you." Miklos' broad red peasant face now frowned with concentration. He put the mouth organ to his thick lips and curled his enormous fingers around it. Then he started to play a folk tune. His thick, heavy-soled shoes beat a relentless accompaniment. Sigmund listened, enthralled. When

Miklos finished he started another, and when that was ended, a third. Then a whistle blew. The engineer took the harmonica from his lips in mid-song. "Time to go back, boy, the concert is over."

When the locomotive was back at the station, Miklos said, "It's all forgiven now, boy, hey? You've forgotten about the Turkish bath?"

"Yes."

"Good. You'll visit me again?"

He nodded as he climbed down from the train and on his way home he thought of the enchanting music Miklos had brought from the harmonica. And from that time on, he appeared at the station frequently when his friend brought in the train and each time he climbed aboard and shared the cheese and onion and bread and then listened to the marvelous music on the harmonica. It was the most important thing that had happened to him that idle summer. And for that reason he now was going to Osiek to study engineering.

He undressed rapidly and climbed into bed and for a long time stared from his window into the starry night.

4.

The stage moved on the twisting road through the lovely country, now fall-painted, and Sigmund stared out of the window, his hand held tightly by his mother. The horses trotted through Valpovo, through Petrovica, now passing within sight of the Drau, now deeper in the forest, and then, late in the afternoon, it entered Osiek, capital of the province of Slavonia.

Osiek, or, as it was called in German, Essegg, originally was a fortress which had been attacked often in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Turks in their numerous incursions against the easternmost Christian country, and which, again and

again, had been occupied by the invaders. At this time the once-mighty Turk no longer was a threat and the city had spread in all directions from its original site so that the fort, or Festung, now was only a portion of the community.

There now were four sections in all: the old Festung, which with its armories was the military center of the city; the Under City, or Unterstadt, so called because the Drau and Danube Rivers which joined just below Osiek occasionally overflowed and covered portions of the lower section; the New City, or Neustadt, where the cattle yards and storage buildings were located; and the Upper City, or Oberstadt, which was the modern part of Osiek, where the newer stores, best hotels and restaurants, and the theatre all were located, and where the stage deposited the Rombergs as they brought their son to Osiek to start his schooling there.

The four sections of the city were connected by horse-drawn streetcars which followed a meandering single-gauge pair of tracks. Drivers sat on their perches and blew little trumpets to announce their approach, greeting citizens in the streets and other cars coming on the same tracks from the opposite direction. Sidings were located here and there and upon reaching one a car would pause and wait for another vehicle coming in the opposite direction so they could pass each other. Residents of Osiek had formed the habit of gathering at these sidings to pet and feed horses which had become endeared to them, and during these pauses the drivers tooted their horns and everybody was quite happy, including passengers who never planned to be anywhere at any special time anyway.

Three regiments of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army were stationed in Osiek at the time—the 79th Infantry Regiment, an artillery regiment, and a regiment of the home guard—as well as a battalion of engineers. The infantry regiment had a superb

band, which formed the foundation for the musical life of the city.

There were some seventy-odd members in this organization and while it was called a military band it was actually closer in makeup to a symphony orchestra, with a large and expert string section. The excellence of many of the military aggregations in the Imperial Army was a result of the compulsory military training statute. Young men who were studying music in the great conservatories in Vienna, Budapest, or Prague volunteered, when their time came, for service in regiments which had large bands, and then spent the large part of their military career perfecting themselves in their music. The bands were invariably the most proficient part of the army, which always had good music and which almost always lost important battles.

The bands were called upon to do more than supply their regiments with the normal military music. They gave public concerts, in theatres, halls, and, in good weather, in parks, and frequently charged admission. Officers in the regiments encouraged paid concerts because each officer was taxed a portion of his salary for the maintenance of the band and outside money earned lessened the taxation.

In addition to the Realschule in which Sigmund had been enrolled, there also was another boys' school, a Gymnasium, in Osiek, and students from both schools had formed a natural and healthy rivalry heightened, unquestionably, by the fact that there was a girls' high school in the city. The students of the Realschule and the Gymnasium competed in many fields, but nowhere was their rivalry more energetic than in struggling for the favors of the girl students.

Osiek boasted, too, of a modern hospital, the only one of its kind in the province, but, wonderful as this was, more wonderful to the residents of the city was the theatre, city-owned, which was

not just an auditorium for traveling artists, but which possessed its own permanent company. The theatre itself was becoming somewhat oldfashioned, being still lighted by gas at a time when more modern theatres in other cities had already changed over to electricity, but it did have excellent acoustics. Twelve hundred spectators could be seated in its orchestra and two balconies. The permanent company was German, and from time to time a name attraction was brought in from Vienna or Budapest. Presented were operas and light operettas with music supplied by the infantry band. When the band was engaged elsewhere the management utilized its absence to present dramatic works.

In Osiek, as in other similar cities in the Habsburg Empire, music and the military dominated everything. The various regiments were stationed within the city itself, and in the evening, the moderate day's duties ended, the armories opened their doors and officers and men poured out in dress uniform to meet their waiting sweethearts and wives and start an evening of dining, strolling, dancing, and music-listening. It was a pleasant life.

5.

Upon arriving in Osiek Adam Romberg engaged rooms in the Grand Hotel in the Oberstadt, dined there, and then strolled through the city. Sigmund looked everywhere and listened to everything. The last time he had been in Osiek had been some two years earlier, and he felt as though he had matured incredibly in those two years. He listened to the sounds of the gypsy orchestras, which seemed to come from all directions; he looked at the resplendent officers and their ladies; he studied the store windows. It was as though he had entered a fairyland, and suddenly Belisce seemed to him to be an unbelievably small and uninteresting place.

Early the next morning the family climbed aboard a streetcar

and rode to the Festung where the Realschule was located, and where the home in which Sigmund would board also was located. The Rombergs registered Sigmund in the school, were greeted by both the dean and the faculty adviser for the new class, were given a list of requisites, went from store to store and bought the necessary books, drawing boards, writing paper, pens and pencils, and then continued to the home of the apothecary Bullard where Adam Romberg had previously made arrangements for Sigmund to stay.

The apothecary shop and the home, which were in the same building, were located just four blocks from the school, close enough, Adam Romberg pointed out, to permit Sigmund to dash from school to the Bullards for a 'second breakfast' during the brief morning recess. This, Mr. Romberg considered, was a praiseworthy situation; he also came home each morning from the plant in Belisce for a quick second breakfast.

Entrance to the Bullard home was through the apothecary shop. As the Rombergs entered, Mr. Bullard was tending a customer. He glanced up, and then when he recognized Adam Romberg he nodded almost curtly and returned to the customer. Sigmund, still in a glow of excitement, suddenly was chilled. Bullard was a tall, heavy-set man with a bleak, stern face. The boy drew closer to his mother as Adam Romberg led them through the store into the doorway which opened on the residence. In the home they were greeted by Mrs. Bullard, who welcomed them so warmly it was as though she had trained herself automatically to compensate for the coldness of her husband. Mrs. Bullard, white-haired, with a soft motherly face, seemed to sense the heartache in Clara Romberg and took her to her arms. Then she shook hands with Adam Romberg, and finally stood back a little to survey Sigmund.

"You're going to miss your parents," she said. "You will always miss them when you are away from them and they will miss

you. But we shall do what we can to act as substitutes while you are with us." She lifted her fine eyes to Mrs. Romberg. "That is how it is. One moment they are babies in our arms and the next minute we turn them over to strangers. My eldest son, Otto, has just left our home to go to the university."

"You are very kind," Mrs. Romberg said.

"Come, look at our home. Mr. Romberg has seen it all—heavens, when he first came here it was almost as though the police were making an inspection." Adam Romberg made a gesture of depreciation but he was not displeased. "I welcomed it," Mrs. Bullard continued. "When I see such thoroughness it is my own way of judging what kind of home the boy must come from."

Mrs. Bullard led the Rombergs first into the dining room, and then down the length of the long room to a large, oldfashioned china closet. "These are my treasures," she said. "I love to look at these." The closet was filled with odds and ends of all kinds—bric-a-brac, glass figures, cups and saucers, souvenirs from many places. From the dining room the Rombergs were taken into a large living room which was in the front of the house adjacent to the shop. In the room was a large piano. Mrs. Bullard said to Sigmund: "Your father has told me you are quite an accomplished musician. I hope that your studies will not take all of your time so that you will be able to play for us occasionally."

"Yes, ma'am," Sigmund said. He eyed the piano happily.

Mrs. Bullard showed the Rombergs through the rest of the comfortable establishment. Sigmund, it appeared, was to share a room with Carl Bullard, younger son of the Bullards who also was starting classes in the Realschule at that time. The next bedroom was occupied by two other student boarders, older boys who were well on their way through the school. Otto's room was kept empty.

Mrs. Bullard and the Rombergs chatted for a little while and

then the apothecary joined them for lunch. It appeared during the pleasant meal that his forbidding exterior created rather a wrong impression. He was not an effusive man but in a quiet way he tried to assure the Rombergs that their son would be well cared for. After lunch Adam Romberg said: "Well, Mrs. Bullard, our son is in your hands. Now we must ask your permission. Do you object if we keep him with us this afternoon until we get our stage?"

"Not if you don't keep him out too late. The boys must rise early for their first day at school."

"Early it shall be," Adam Romberg said. "We do not wish to interfere in any way with any schedule you set up."

"What time does your stage leave?" Mrs. Bullard asked.

"There is one rather late this evening," Mr. Romberg said.

"There is going to be an official tattoo this evening. Perhaps you will be able to see it."

"Oh, Father, please let me see it!" Sigmund asked eagerly.

"It starts at sundown," Adam said. "I don't see why the boy can't see this. It is a special event."

The Rombergs bade the Bullards farewell, and they left the house. They spent the afternoon seeing the sights, had an early dinner, and then witnessed the tattoo. As his father had said, it was a welcome to Osiek he would never forget.

6.

On the faculty records of the Realschule of Osiek the name of Professor Luigi Boggio was listed opposite the title of head of the Drawing Department, and Professor Boggio, in fact, did lend to this field of artistry enough of his time to earn his salary. However, it was only his time he gave to this subject; his true love lay elsewhere. For Professor Boggio the world began and ended with music, and the pictures his pupils sketched

on their drawing boards were as valueless to him as the caricatures in chalk which sometimes adorned the outer walls of the school building. He was quite competent in correcting perspective and rearranging groupings, and he could tone down garish colors satisfactorily, but his real existence commenced when he was finished with the required hours of art instruction and turned to the school orchestra.

In any other place than the Austro-Hungarian Empire of Franz Josef, this dual endeavor might have been surprising. But, as has been suggested, music was of the highest importance, not only in the army, but everywhere else. The government supported and subsidized orchestras in schools, and the Realschule members were quite as proud of their organization as, say, the musicians in the 79th Infantry Band were of theirs.

The school orchestra consisted of sixty students. They played on instruments provided by the government. So important was music to the lives of all concerned, that it was arranged that members of the military band might, in off-duty hours, act as instructors for the school musicians. The leader of the military band, a regular-army sergeant, was the conductor of the school orchestra, and the musical library of the infantry band was available to the students.

Supervisor of the school orchestra, selector of talent, keeper of the files, and most persistent listener was Professor Boggio. This extra effort was donated by him to the school. He asked for nothing more than to be connected in any and every way with the orchestra.

On the third day of school a notice was sent around to all the classes requesting all new students who could play a musical instrument, or who wished to learn how to play one, to report to the auditorium. Boys who volunteered were immediately excused from whatever classes they were in, and in short order a score

or more boys were gathered in the large room. Presently Professor Boggio appeared.

The professor was an Italian who was born in Trieste. He was tall, thin, and hollow-cheeked. He was a nervous man who moved in a series of hops, like a gangly bird. He controlled himself without too much difficulty in the drawing classes, where, actually, he was only partially present; but in matters pertaining to music he was a fanatic. Good music would affect him as it might affect another person to drink champagne. Bad music would make him suffer tortures.

He mounted the stage in front of the auditorium and looked at the boys who were seated in the first few rows. He looked from face to face, as though seeking something, and then he raised his hand in a nervous gesture to his hair and tugged. To the startled surprise of the boys he removed the hair, a full, flowing wig, revealing a bone-smooth skull. He rubbed the wig roughly between his hands, as though he were drying his fingers, and then stuck the wig back again, leaving it set as it touched his head, awry. The boys roared despite themselves.

Professor Boggio looked at them sternly and then shouted, "So you want to study music. Perhaps you think it's an easy way to get out of your classes, hey?" He peered at face after face. "I like boys who want to study music, who *honestly* want to study music. But I warn you, it's not a game. It means work. Work and more work, work after regular school hours when the other boys go out and play. There will be afternoons when you want to join your friends but Professor Boggio, the mean old man with the wig, will order you to stay indoors and scrape your fiddles and blow on your horns. Now, anybody who doesn't want to work like that better leave now." He glared at the students. Then his voice softened as no one left. "So, you still want to stay. You want to learn about music. It will be work, as I have said, but in return for your work you will learn the greatest art that the Almighty

has bestowed upon man. You will be able to make yourselves over into living angels by simply picking up your chosen musical instrument and playing on it. A new world of beauty will be opened to you. Other men will be limited by their lives, by their work, by their worries and troubles, but you will be able to rise above all that. You will be able at any time to transport yourselves from your everyday lives into new lives of splendor. All over the world great masters have left behind priceless pages which you alone will be able to read. That is what music will do for you."

Professor Boggio paused, tall, thin, shaking with his own emotion. The boys listened silently. Sigmund, among them, leaned forward tensely.

It seemed to him that Osiek was piling wonder upon wonder. He had known that he would be able to listen to more music in this new city than he had ever been able to hear before, but he had thought it would be outside of school. When he had learned there was a school orchestra and that students were permitted to play in it, he was filled with joy. His first sight of Professor Boggio made him laugh, along with the other boys. But as the professor spoke desire to laugh left him and he hung onto each word as though it were meant for him alone.

Professor Boggio resumed. "Now, I will listen to each of you, one at a time. For those of you who show talent, I will arrange to have lessons given. There is a great goal ahead of you. When you start your fifth year here you will be permitted to try for the school orchestra." He repeated slowly, with emphasis, 'the school orchestra,' and said the words as though he might have been saying 'the Vienna Philharmonic.'

Sigmund's heart dropped. Four years to wait. Four years before he would be permitted to sit with the select group who practiced and played each week. It seemed a lifetime away.

"All right then," the professor said brusquely. "We will start

with the first row. This young man. What instrument do you play?"

A short blond-haired boy with a square face and the heavy features of the peasant stood up. "The piano, sir."

"The piano, hey? Good. We can always use pianists. There is the piano. Play something." The professor seated himself on a chair, took off his toupee, wiped his face, put the toupee on his head again.

The boy walked over to the piano. He swallowed hard and took a deep breath. He lifted his thick arms and brought his hands down on the keys in a tremendous blow, and, tapping his right foot loudly as he played, began to go through some Czerny exercises. His playing was even, with an unchanging beat, and his foot, thumping heavily, sounded almost as though it were a drum accompaniment.

Professor Boggio listened for about two minutes and then shouted, "Enough!" The boy stopped, his hands in midair. "You will give me your name and I will notify you when you may take lessons. You may return now to your class." He turned to the boy in the next seat. "And you, young man, what do you play?"

"Nothing," the boy said.

"Nothing. Good. Nothing. What do you want to play?"

"The drum."

"The drum? And why do you want to play the drum?"

"I like the way it sounds," the boy said eagerly.

"You will leave your name. I will let you know when you can start lessons on the drum." He watched the boy run out of the room. "He likes the sound of the drum." He pushed his toupee back and forth on his skull.

The third boy aspired to play the violin. Professor Boggio handed him an instrument. He watched closely as the boy took the violin from him. He scrutinized his handling of it, from the moment his fingers touched the polished old wood. Sigmund

watched too. This was his instrument. The boy tucked the violin under his chin. He brought the bow across the strings and at the first notes the professor stiffened and an expression of acute pain appeared on his gaunt face. The boy began to play a folk dance and with the first wrong note Professor Boggio shivered and with the second he shuddered and when the boy played a third flat note he stiffened and pulled at his toupee in frenzy. "Stop! Stop!" he shouted. "Can't you hear how you are playing?" He looked around in fury and his eyes fell upon Sigmund's face and read thereon a pain akin to his own. "What are you making faces for, young man?" he thundered. Then he looked at the toupee in his hand. He smiled and calmed himself. He held out the toupee. "So what? So I did it again? Is that what makes you look as though you were smelling bad fish?"

"No, sir," Sigmund said.

"No, sir," the professor repeated. "You are unhappy because this young man is playing music as though his fiddle were untuned, perhaps?"

"It is untuned," Sigmund said.

Professor Boggio lifted his head sharply. "So, it is untuned. And perhaps you can tell me which string is out of tune?"

"Yes, sir," Sigmund said. "It is the E-string."

Professor Boggio jutted his lower lip. "The E-string. And now, young man, I suppose you will tell me you can tune the violin that is out of tune and play something on it without flatting?"

"Yes, sir," Sigmund said.

Professor Boggio turned to the hapless boy standing with the violin at his side. "You will leave your name," he said in a kind voice. "I will arrange for you to take lessons so you find out the difference between notes and flat notes. Now hand the violin to this young man, this one . . . what is *your* name?"

"Sigmund Romberg, sir."

"And how old are you, Sigmund Romberg?"

"I was ten on my last birthday."

"Good. Now you take the violin and tune it for me and then let me see how you play without flats. What have you decided to play for us?"

"I would like to play Gypsy Airs."

Professor Boggio closed his eyes. "Gypsy Airs. You mean some gypsy melodies you have picked up somewhere. Some tunes you have memorized?"

"No, sir. I mean Gypsy Airs, by Sarasate."

"I am listening."

Sigmund plucked at the strings until the violin was in key, and then he brought the bow across the strings in the first imperative notes of the composition. At the first sounds the professor tightened his lean jaw and leaned forward. The boy played through the slow first movement and then plunged into the brilliant, rapid second movement. Professor Boggio, his head jerking violently with the music, his sunken eyes gleaming, followed him, and when Sigmund finished the music and looked up, the professor leaped from his seat and threw his arms around him. "Gypsy Airs!" he shouted. "And then he played Gypsy Airs!" His swarthy complexion was flushed. "Where have you learned to play, Sigmund Romberg?"

"I studied in Belisce."

"You studied in Belisce. And how long have you been playing?"

"Since I was six, sir."

"Since you were six. You are now ten and you have been playing a violin for more than four years. You may return to your class. I will let you know when you may start your lessons here."

"Thank you, sir." Sigmund handed the violin back with reluctance.

"Wednesdays will be easy," Professor Boggio said. "Then you will be excused from your drawing class. That I can do. But Saturdays. Saturdays when you could be free. Will you rehearse then?"

"Rehearse, sir?" Sigmund asked from a dry throat.

"The school orchestra rehearses on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Will you mind giving up your free time on Saturdays?"

The boy waited a moment and then he asked, "You mean when I reach my fifth year in school?"

"I mean now," Professor Boggio roared.

7.

He woke and automatically began to slip out of bed and then he remembered it was Saturday. Saturday meant no school and he lay back again and closed his eyes and then he opened them suddenly and sat up. Saturday meant no school but Saturday also meant something else: rehearsal with the school orchestra. The first rehearsal.

The week had gone by quickly. It hadn't been easy all the time, even though the prospect of playing with the school orchestra had made up for many little difficulties. He had met the two older students, Willi and Eric, and had met Carl Bullard. He liked the Bullard boy. The two older boys had treated him with the friendly contempt advanced students accord newcomers.

The first few nights away from home had been painful. He felt young and small and seemed to be in a place that was too large for him. In the evenings, when the excitements and constant surprises of the day were ended and he was in his room, alone or perhaps with Carl, it was borne upon him that he was away from his home, away from his parents, away from his own brother. Where were the familiar sounds of home: his father's voice, his mother's soft answers, Hugo turning the pages of his schoolbook,

humming tonelessly, the riffling of cards that indicated his mother and father were preparing to play whist, the smell of his father's cigar, the sounds of him playing the piano. All of these sounds and smells were strong in their absence. And when he crawled into bed—usually Carl was already asleep; Carl was secure and at home—Sigmund lay awake, and for the first time in his life his mother did not come in to kiss him goodnight, to lean over him so that he smelled the faint elusive perfume. The kilometers between Osiek and Belisce multiplied at night.

But the week had gone by rapidly, nevertheless; he had a healthy boy's interest in the new things that were constantly coming before his eyes, the detail of classwork, new friends, new sights in the city, new conditions at the Bullards. The older students, for instance, began to give signs that they considered the newcomer fair game for pranks. Since the other boy, Carl, was protected by his family, their interest in Sigmund had just doubled.

And at two o'clock this afternoon the greatest moment of all would arrive. For, at that moment, Master Sergeant Alois Menges, conductor of the 79th Infantry Regimental Band, would lift his baton before the assembled school orchestra of the Realschule; and tucked away among the violin players would be Sigmund Romberg.

Mrs. Bullard had given all four of her student boarders permission to remain in bed an hour later than usual this morning, but Sigmund remembered suddenly that he had planned to write to his parents this morning. The week had been so crowded he had not had a chance before. He dressed and sat at his writing desk and took a clean sheet of paper. There were so many things to write about he scarcely knew where to begin. The orchestra was the most important thing, of course, but then there were the tambouritza bands and the girls from the high school and the full-dress retreat he had been lucky enough to witness at the parade

ground in front of the armory. Somehow he felt he also ought to tell something about some of the subjects he was studying in the classrooms, although, at the moment, his class work seemed extremely unimportant compared to so many other things. But still he was supposed to be learning how to be an engineer some day.

He had put down the date and had written 'Dearest Mother and Father' when he heard voices outside his bedroom door and then, a moment later, the door was opened discreetly. He looked up and saw the face of Mrs. Bullard, wreathed in smiles, and just behind it the face of his mother. He jumped up from his chair and rushed to the door. "Mama, Mama," he cried excitedly.

Mrs. Romberg knelt and hugged him fiercely. He buried his face in her shoulder, smelling the perfume that belonged to her, that always would belong to her. "I could not help it," she was saying. "I had to see you again. It's been so lonely at home without you."

Sigmund held his face hidden because he did not want her to see the tears of joy that filled his eyes. Then, when the first excitement was over, he discovered he was somewhat embarrassed. The door to the next room opened and the two older students, Willi and Eric, were standing there, looking at the scene with unconcealed amusement. Sigmund pushed away from his mother and straightened up. "Hello, Mother," he said, in a different voice altogether.

Mrs. Romberg followed his glance and saw the older boys. She took in the situation instantly. "I had to do some shopping in Osiek today so I just dropped in to say hello," she said in a normal voice. "I have asked Mrs. Bullard for permission to have you with me for lunch. I will wait in the living room until you are ready."

She took the apothecary's wife by the arm and walked down

the hall. Sigmund glanced at Willi and Eric. The expressions on their faces did not make him feel better.

Willi Haller and Eric Haupt were both over sixteen, which made them almost young men. Willi, a large, hulking lad, played on the school soccer team; as an athlete he was extremely popular, both with other students and with the girls of the high school. Mentally he was not the brightest boy in school, and he depended largely upon Eric to see that he got through his classes. Eric was a small, thin boy with a ferret's face; he considered he made a good bargain. For a little coaching work with Willi he achieved prominence as the confidant of one of the school's leading athletes.

Eric began to move back and forth mincingly and Willi leaned over and patted his cheek. "I could not help it," Willi said in falsetto. "I had to see you again, darling."

"Oh, Mama, Mama, Mama," Eric said.

Willi pinched Eric's cheek. "We'll have lunch together. The terrible food you eat at the Bullards' must be hurting my baby's stomach."

Sigmund doubled his fists and moved toward them. Willi pulled Eric back into the room. "You must get ready, darling," he said, in the same falsetto. Then the door was slammed in Sigmund's face and he stood alone in the corridor, tears of rage breaking from his eyes. He went back into his room. Carl eyed him silently. Sigmund wondered what would happen now. There had been the usual things: the bed short-sheeted, the underwear tied into knots, the schoolbooks hidden. But what now?

When he joined his mother in the living room and saw the happiness in her face he forgot the older boys. "We shall have breakfast here and then spend the day together. Mrs. Bullard says that I may keep you out until ten o'clock tonight."

"I have to rehearse this afternoon," Sigmund said.

"Rehearse? For what?"

"For the school orchestra." He had resolved to be reserved, but

the enthusiasm overcame him. "Oh, Mama," he said excitedly. "We had a trial for musicians for the school orchestra and I played the violin for Professor Boggio and he said I played well enough to join the school orchestra right now."

"It is a great honor," Mrs. Bullard said. "We are very proud of your son, Mrs. Romberg. No one has ever played in the orchestra so young. It is a rule that students have to study for four years before they are permitted to join the orchestra but they waived the rule for Sigmund."

Mrs. Romberg was caught between pride and the old nagging fear. "It is a fine thing," she murmured.

"Maybe you could come to the rehearsal, Mama," Sigmund said. "Maybe Professor Boggio will let you."

Mrs. Bullard, studying the expression on Mrs. Romberg's face, said: "It is a school activity, my dear. It does not interfere with the boy's studies. Sigmund has been doing his academic work faithfully. As a matter of fact, if the students don't maintain a high standard in their regular studies they must resign from any other activity. So if Sigmund wants to stay in the orchestra that will be the best guaranty that he keeps up his regular work."

Mrs. Romberg nodded. "Music is a very important thing in our home, Mrs. Bullard," she said slowly. "It is just that I do not want my son to lose his perspective."

After breakfast they left the house, pausing in front of the door while a streetcar passed, the driver sounding his horn cheerfully. Mrs. Romberg looked at her son, her eyebrows raised. "I believe it was wrong for me to come so soon. But I missed you so much, Sigmund."

He grinned. "I'm glad you came."

"Who are those two older boys? I don't like their faces. One looks too hard and the other too shrewd."

"Oh, they're sixth-graders. The big one is a soccer player. I don't have any trouble with them."

"Well, what shall we do? Shall we stroll around and look at the stores? Is there anything you need? Do you have everything?"

His eyes shone. "We shall see."

"What time do you have to report for rehearsal?"

"Two o'clock. Oh, Mother, it's so wonderful. I've never heard so much music. The military band plays all the time. The gypsy orchestras, the tambouritza bands. And in the school orchestra. Not just a few players, but imagine, sixty of them. And Professor Boggio is so funny. He has false hair and he keeps pulling it off and tears at it with his hands and then sticks it back on his head any which way. When he listens to music his eyes seem to shut halfway as though he were almost falling asleep. Only if he hears a single false note it is as though someone stuck a needle into him." He giggled. "He jumps up and tears off his toupee and begins to scream."

"Is that all you have to tell me about your first week in school? Only about music?"

"Oh, we have had lots of work all week. So far it's pretty easy. The algebra is just what we learned in Belisce. The teacher says he is reviewing what we are supposed to know. He said we probably forgot it all during the summer."

A young girl, walking with a lady, passed. "Hello, Sigmund," the girl said. The woman smiled politely.

Sigmund blurted, "Hello," and turned red.

His mother said nothing for a few moments as they walked on and then she asked, her eyes twinkling, "Well, are you going to tell me who that was?"

"She goes to the girls' school." His face was flaming.

"And what is her name?"

"Magda." He looked up. "They try to keep the girls from the fellows in each school," he said rapidly. "I mean there is only one girls' school and it's a kind of a game. We try to keep the other

fellows, in the Gymnasium, from having the girls and they try to keep them from us."

"I see," Mrs. Romberg said. "So it seems your school life is very interesting already. You are joining the orchestra and you have a girl friend. Your father will be interested in this progress you are making."

"She isn't a girl friend," he mumbled miserably. "It's just that I have to be loyal to our school."

They continued to walk through the streets and she thought how much had been taken away from her in one week.

8.

Just before two o'clock, after a fine lunch, Sigmund led his mother to the school auditorium. Outside the huge doors he paused and then looked at his mother uncomfortably. She said swiftly, feeling a pang in her heart, "You would rather I did not attend the rehearsal, wouldn't you?"

He nodded unhappily. "It's just that the other boys might laugh at me," he said. "You know how it is if a mother hangs around a fellow. They call him a mama's boy."

"Yes, I understand," his mother said. "Well, shall I meet you here when the rehearsal is over? Or would you rather meet some other place where the boys won't see you?"

"We could meet at the Bullards'," he said.

"All right. What time will you be finished?"

"About four o'clock."

"In front of the apothecary at four o'clock."

At that moment Professor Boggio appeared. When he saw Sigmund he rushed over to him. "Here you are," he said loudly. "Here is the musician. You are on time. That is good." He saw Mrs. Romberg for the first time. He removed his large green hat and bowed low. "Madame," he said courteously.

"I am Mrs. Romberg, Sigmund's mother."

Professor Boggio bowed again, even lower this time. "Madame, t is an honor to meet you," he said enthusiastically. "I have wondered from whom our young musician has come. Madame, you have a son with a talent, a great talent. You should be very proud of this young man. One day he will play music for the world."

Mrs. Romberg nodded silently.

"His technique is superb for a boy his age," Professor Boggio continued. He seemed not to perceive the nervousness of the boy and the rather chilly attitude of the mother. "It is one of the great satisfactions of spending years with young hopefuls to find one such as your son now and then. Not that one finds them often, not often, no indeed. But you shall hear for yourself. Madame, I would consider it an honor if you would be my guest at the rehearsal."

Mrs. Romberg looked at her son doubtfully. The professor considered both faces and then said: "Of course the boy is afraid the others will tease him if it is known his mother is present. Sigmund, you go ahead. Your mother will enter the auditorium with me. No one will know who she is. How will that be?"

The boy's face became radiant. "Oh, Mother," he said. "Then you will be able to hear." He raced away, entering the building, and then the professor, with great style, held out his hand and escorted Mrs. Romberg into the rehearsal room.

"We shall sit in the rear," he said. "Madame, I repeat, your son possesses a great talent. We must nurture that talent. It is like a plant, seeking the sun. It must be fed, watered, tended. Your son one day may become a fine musician. I have listened to him play. He has music in his fingers. Someday, perhaps, he will have music in his heart as well."

"I want my son to become an engineer, Professor Boggio," Mrs. Romberg said quietly.

The professor waved his hand in depreciation. "An engineer. The world is filled with engineers. What do they do? They build bridges or they make highways. What is an engineer? There are millions of them. Can you name a dozen engineers? Of course not. Who can? But music! Music! That is a different matter entirely. A great musician. A virtuoso. Ah, Madame, that is something to look forward to."

"Engineers lead steady, reasonable lives, Professor Boggio," Mrs. Romberg said quietly. "They have homes and they raise families. I have no desire to see my son enter into a wild Bohemian existence. I want him to have an honorable career as a professional man. If he wishes to continue his music as a hobby, as his father does, that is splendid. I have no objection to that at all. I approve of that. Our family loves music and my husband plays in a quartet in Belisce. He is an excellent pianist. I too am an artist in my own way. I have written stories. Perhaps you have read some of them. I write under the name of Clara Berg."

"But of course," the professor said. "These things must all be so. Where else could he have found his instincts for art?"

"But his father and I believe that music and writing must be regarded as hobbies, as the cultural side of one's existence." She smiled. "But it is still a long way off, and many things will happen."

The orchestra began to tune up and then Master Sergeant Menges, a tall, frail-looking man, stood up on the conductor's podium. Mrs. Romberg, who was slightly nearsighted, held a lorgnette before her eyes. She looked from place to place in the orchestra.

"He is in the second-violin section, Mrs. Romberg," Professor Boggio said. "There, to the left of the conductor."

"Second-violin section, Professor?" Mrs. Romberg asked proudly. "My son in the second-violin section? And why? He is

surely good enough to play with the first violins." She lowered her glasses and blushed.

Professor Boggio took off his toupee and rubbed it between his hands. He grinned devilishly. "I see," he said. "I see, yes, I see."

9.

Sigmund rushed up to the apothecary shop. His mother was standing there. "Well, Mother, how did you like it? Wasn't it wonderful?"

The excellent quality of the orchestral performance had, as a matter of fact, surprised Mrs. Romberg. The students had played with proficiency and feeling and although she hesitated admitting it even to herself she had listened with a considerable pride in the fact that her son was a part of the unit. "It was very good," she said. "And you played beautifully."

"Did I?" he asked with excitement. He waved his hand. "Oh, you couldn't have heard me with all the others playing."

"I heard every note you played. And the professor tore off his toupee only once."

"I know, I know," he said gleefully. "When that oboe went flat." Then he looked at her shyly. "What did he say about my playing?"

"He thinks you may be a fine performer one day."

"Did he say that?" he asked eagerly.

"Let us take a streetcar to the Oberstadt. There are some things I want to buy. And we can eat up there later."

"Did he really say that?" he persisted.

"Yes," his mother said slowly. "He really did say that. Come, there is a car. Let's have dinner at the Grand Hotel."

Later they rode back to the Bullards'. The night was cool and sweet and Mrs. Romberg, troubled, held to his hand and thought

again how much she had lost of him. She thought how quickly he was slipping away, how much of his life was already out of hers. She looked at her watch. It was almost ten o'clock. "Mrs. Bullard said she would leave the key under the front doormat," she said. "Be quiet when you go into the house. It was very kind of her to allow you to remain with me until this hour and I don't want you to disturb the family when you go in."

"I'll be quiet, Mother."

"Sigmund."

"Yes, Mother."

"I will not embarrass you by coming this way again."

"Oh, Mother." He gripped her hand.

"I know how it must be. We don't want the other boys to think you are a mother's baby."

"I'm glad you came, Mother," he said passionately.

"We probably will not see each other again until the Christmas holidays."

He fought back tears.

"Remember, keep up in your studies."

"I will. I promise I will."

"Listen to what I have to tell you," she said quietly. The hoofs of the horse clattered cosily as she spoke. "Music is important. But your studies are more important. I don't want you to spend any less time with the orchestra, and I must say I was very proud of you this afternoon. But always remember that your father and I are hoping, hoping that you will become a fine engineer. We want you to have a happy life. When you are grown and have a beautiful home and a wife and children there will always be time for music, as there is time in our home now. But your studies and your career are more important than anything else."

"Yes, Mother," he said soberly.

"Please write to us often. If you find it hard to write, tell Mrs.

Bullard what you want to say and she will write it for you. Your father and I are very lonely without you and we think of you all the time and if you don't write it will be more than we can bear."

"I'll write. I was just starting a letter to you when you came this morning."

The streetcar approached the block on which the Bullard home was located and Mrs. Romberg signaled to the driver to stop. They descended and remained in the street talking until a car came from the opposite direction and then she knelt swiftly and held him tightly and kissed him. She boarded the streetcar and he stood there and waved to her until the car disappeared up the hill.

He reached under the mat for the key. He felt alone again, as he had a week before when his parents had gone. He opened the door and entered the shop. It was dark. He locked the door again and tiptoed across the shop, moving carefully so as not to knock anything over. He opened the door leading into the huge dining room and started to walk across it, and then he stopped and broke into a cold sweat and screamed. In front of him was a huge figure, its face grinning hideously, its body a floating stream of white fright. His hand shot out and encountered a small apothecary's scale on the sideboard. He grabbed it in panic and flung it at the grinning horror. There was a loud crash and the grinning face tumbled down and there was a sound of breaking glass and as he stood, petrified, unable to move, giving scream after scream, there were footsteps and the doors opened and Mr. and Mrs. Bullard entered, lights in hand.

His eyes poured tears and when the room lights were on he could not stop his shaking, even though he could then see what it was. The grinning face was a melon, its insides scooped out, eyes, nose and mouth carved out, and a candle placed inside. The white flowing body was nothing more than a sheet.

"Those boys," Mr. Bullard said angrily. "Here, stop bawling, boy. It's nothing to be afraid of."

Now, in the light, however, he could see what the scale had struck: Mrs. Bullard's treasured china closet. On the floor were the broken, scattered fragments of the collection she had valued so much. His fright now was translated into panic at the damage he had done. Mrs. Bullard held him tightly against her and said reassuringly, "It is nothing, nothing. Each thing can be replaced. It is nothing at all."

Mr. Bullard's stern features did not relax but his voice was unexpectedly gentle. "It's not your fault, boy. There is nothing to cry about. Don't worry, the others will get the punishment."

He could not stop his sobbing. Mr. Bullard disappeared for a moment and then returned with a bottle and a spoon. "Here," he said brusquely. "Take this. It will make you feel better."

He opened his mouth dutifully and emptied the spoon. Then he started to choke. His face became a book of misery.

"Castor oil is good for growing boys," said Mr. Bullard. "It cures whatever ails them."

10.

After the success—too much success—of the melon episode, Willi and Eric somehow decided that Sigmund now was a member of the group, and they left off their hazing. Perhaps the punishment meted out by the Bullards, deduction of a portion of their weekly allowance until the damage was paid for, had something to do with their reformation.

School settled down to an even routine. Classwork was not too difficult and Sigmund spent just enough time on his studies to get by. His real interests became more and more identified with those of Professor Boggio.

Between the two, the boy not yet eleven and the old Italian

teacher, there developed a warm and mutually respectful friendship. Sigmund spent many hours with the old professor; he was never to forget his patience, his kindness, his absorbing interest in music. The boy began to help in the filing and maintenance of the library which belonged to the school orchestra. He tried his hand at the various instruments owned by the school. It was not hard for him to make music out of almost any of them. He would pick up a tuba or a trumpet, finger it, blow into it, and in a little while would piece out a melody. The professor, deep in the study of a score—he read musical scores as others read books—, would raise his head and he would watch the small boy, watch and listen.

After the semi-weekly rehearsals the two of them, the old cadaverous teacher, with his strange accent, a combination of Italian, Hungarian, German, and Croatian, and the young boy, eager and intense, would discuss the playing. The boy, after he discovered Boggio would listen to him without offense and would not laugh at him or chide him for impertinence, would comment on the conducting of Sergeant Menges, on the performance of this or that section of the orchestra. There were portions *he* would have conducted more rapidly, or louder or softer. Here, where the violin section dragged, *he* would have accelerated it. Professor Boggio would listen and sometimes he would nod gravely and say, "You are right, Sigmund, I felt it myself at that point," or perhaps he would take down the score and show the boy where the conductor was right and he was wrong. When he corrected Sigmund's suggestions, he always added: "But remember, that is always for the conductor to say. The composer has left a skeleton and it is for the conductor to put flesh on it. Remember that when you may be conducting your own orchestra some day, and if you *feel* that it must be done one way and not another, do it your way. That is what conductors give to music."

One day, in discussing Sigmund's future, Professor Boggio

said: "There is nothing, remember, nothing, more important in this world than music. To be sure, all art is important. Painting, writing, sculpture, all of these things are signs that man has something in him that is divine. The human race is always torn between two things: it eats and lives like animals, but it thinks and dreams like gods. And of all the arts music is the greatest, for in music men speak with the tones of angels. No man is responsible for the talent he possesses. It is something that is lent to him, for him to treasure during his lifetime like a holy chalice. The talent for playing music that you have was once owned by someone else now dead and now it is your turn to use it. While you are alive you must be faithful to it. To ignore it would be sinful. You were given this talent to use and you must use it."

In other countries, perhaps, or in other times, a concentration on something as serious as music by a boy of that age might imply an unhealthy seriousness, an introversion that interfered with normal interests. In the land of the Habsburgs before the century was out, however, it was merely a distillation of a spirit that pervaded the country.

It was a gay and joyous thing; it was gypsy fiddles in little *Weinstuben;* it was the *Schrammel,* wandering in the hills in Tyrolean dress, playing zithers and fiddles; it was Strauss, father and son, and Joseph Lanner. There was music everywhere, in cafes, restaurants, parks. It was part of the life of the people to a greater degree, perhaps, than anywhere else in the world. Music was the background to everything: to eating and to playing; to marching as soldiers; to memories of the past and enjoyment of the present. The future? That was nothing to worry about at the moment.

Osiek seemed to him the end-all of everything that was musical and fascinating. School finished for the day, nothing to do for Professor Boggio, he took to wandering about the city, street by

street, until there was nothing of Osiek that did not belong to him. He strolled, inhaling the atmosphere of his first city, listening to whatever strains of music would be coming from this building or that. He learned when the military band rehearsed and whenever he could he was on hand to listen, his eyes sparkling, his foot tapping time to the stirring melodies. He followed tattoos, absorbing the glitter and emotion brought on by the magnificent combinations of uniforms, officers, ladies, prancing horses, shining carriages. It all became a part of him, each note, the tradition-dictated detail, the moments of medieval splendor. It was a swan song of a way of life that never again could be recaptured, except, perhaps, years later on the stages of theatres, in musical operettas written by those who had seen and remembered.

His peripatetic habits, of course, conflicted with the schedule Mrs. Bullard sought to maintain with her boarders. Time meant little to him when he lost himself in observation of some particularly colorful thing, when he sat at the piers on the Drau and watched the vessels and listened to the songs of the sailors and smelled the strange odors of the exotic cargoes, when he leaned against a wall outside a gypsy restaurant and seemed to absorb the gypsy airs through his skin.

He was often late for dinner, or if he slipped away in the evening he kept the patient and kindly Mrs. Bullard in a state of fear until he returned. Soon after his arrival at the Bullards, however, he discovered, with almost a fiendish ingenuity, that music, which was so important to him, could be useful as well.

He found that Mrs. Bullard was pathetically fond of two old Austrian folk tunes: *Grossmutterchen* ('Little Grandmother') and *Weisst Du Mutter Was Ich Getraumt Habe* ('Do You Know What I Dreamed, Mother'). No matter what mood Mrs. Bullard was in, the sound of either of these two simple melodies would melt her. When he appeared late for dinner he would sit down at

the piano and before Mrs. Bullard knew he had returned he would begin to play one or another of the songs.

Mrs. Bullard would start for the living room with the intention of scolding him for his tardiness, but invariably, before she reached the room, the music would have done its work. By the time she stood by the piano her old sweet face would be wreathed in a tender smile and the stern words would be forgotten.

It soon became generally understood in the Bullard home that whenever either of the two old tunes would be heard on the piano Sigmund had been guilty of something and was buying his way out with music.

II

As a surprise, Adam Romberg sent a private coach to Osiek to bring his son home for the Christmas holidays. With a fine understanding of such matters, Mr. Romberg sent the coach unattended. The carriage arrived at the Bullards' on the last day of school and the driver, in smart livery, entered the apothecary's shop and asked for Master Romberg.

Sigmund tried not to show his excitement, particularly since Willi and Eric were on hand, mouths agape. Sigmund now had a complete rapport with the two older boys. The melon episode brought about an initial status, and then Willi and Eric discovered the new boarder was very useful indeed. It was customary, in the neverending struggle for the favors of the high-school girls, to accompany courtship with music. The young swains from both the Gymnasium and the Realschule would save their money until they could afford to hire a few musicians —gypsies, soldiers, or even members of one of the school orchestras—to serenade their sweethearts. The business was on a socially formalized basis and a young man considered a regular course of serenading a mark not only of personal affluence, but an indication of sophistication as well.

Now all this had been conducted rather haphazardly. Students

had been in the custom of rounding up individual players when they needed them. Soon after commencing school, however, Sigmund, immersed in the musical life and himself hired once or twice to play a violin under some girl's window, thought that the whole thing could be organized on a more businesslike basis. Whereupon he had talked to several other students, and had organized a few units, of different sizes. Then he let the word get around that one had only to communicate with him, indicating the size of the aggregation required, the time and place, and the matter would be taken care of.

Willi and Eric benefited by this new development. Being roommates of the entrepreneur, they had an inside line on his services. Not only that but, in return for small favors, Sigmund occasionally allowed them the services of a band on credit, collecting payment on the installment plan. Willi and Eric instantly increased in stature in the eyes of their girls, and in turn they changed their own attitude toward Sigmund to one of deep respect. On this cold winter's afternoon they hastened to carry his luggage into the carriage. As a gesture of friendship to old customers, Sigmund had arranged for them to have a band for their use on Christmas Day free of charge.

The driver snapped his whip sharply and the horse started off. A brief flurry of snow had fallen earlier in the day, and as the carriage left the city and proceeded along the country road, the fall became heavier. The horse trotted briskly. Streams of vapor poured from its nostrils. The wheels turned on the frost-hard road with a metallic crunch. Sigmund leaned back in the coach, a blanket around him, and enjoyed a vast satisfaction. Now that Willi and Eric and the Bullards were not around, he let himself show the excitement he felt. A carriage for him alone!

The carriage pulled into Belisce just after dark. For a moment he had the feeling of entering a strange place. He felt a sudden shock as he realized that he had outgrown his childhood village.

To his eyes, now used to the spaciousness of Osiek, Belisce seemed quite small. The streets were narrower than he had remembered them and he no sooner entered the town when the carriage stopped in front of his father's home. Belisce, he realized, could fit into one corner of just a single one of the four sections of Osiek.

He felt an inexplicable sadness he could not understand. At that moment, although he was unable to comprehend it, he had outgrown his childhood. In the four months he had been in Osiek a change had been wrought, the change that his mother had foreseen. He was home, but it no longer completely was home and he could not give himself wholly to it any more.

His mother and father were waiting at the window and as soon as the carriage stopped they ran from the house. He climbed down from the carriage and was enveloped in their arms. "How big you've got," his mother said. She repeated this again and again, although he had not grown very much at all. There was a new air of strangeness about him which made her feel that he had grown larger physically.

His father held him tightly and the boy felt the bristly mustache, flecked with snow, brush against his cheek. He smelled the perfume of his mother and his eyes filled with sudden tears and he clutched both of them hard until his father, after whipping out a large handkerchief and blowing his nose, said, "Well, well, let's go inside. We'll all freeze out here."

2.

The climax of the holiday social season in Belisce was the annual New Year's Day reception given by the Gutmanns in their manor house. As far back as Sigmund could remember there had been a party there on New Year's Day. With each passing year he had been permitted to remain at the party longer and longer, and this year, as a further mark of his development, his

father announced that he could remain for the entire party, or at least as long as his parents remained.

The announcement was made after the family had finished dinner the first evening of Sigmund's return, and were gathered in the familiar living room of the house. Adam Romberg had lighted a cigar, as usual, and the sweet smell of the faint perfume that his mother used blended with the fragrant smoke, and Sigmund had sighed and felt himself slipping into an old familiar scene.

Upon his parents' questioning, he spoke at length about Osiek, his school progress, his orchestral work; he was delighted at the interest paid him not only by his parents but by Hugo, who sprawled on the floor, his chin cupped in his hands, listening with eyes wide in wonder. When Sigmund informed his family about the organization of the bands for courtship purposes, they looked at each other in amazement. Adam Romberg recovered first and said, with a short laugh, "Well, our son may be musical, but it appears that we need never have any fear for him in business either."

"All of your players must be older than you," Mrs. Romberg said. "How did you get them to work for you?"

"Oh, it wasn't hard," Sigmund said. "Now that I'm running the business there is more work for everyone and they all make more money. It makes everybody happier."

Adam raised his eyebrows. "You must come down to the office with me," he said, "and look around. Maybe you can make some changes there that will be profitable for everyone concerned." Then he smiled. "Your mother and I had prepared a little surprise for you. We planned that you be allowed to remain at the Gutmann party as long as we do, this year. Unfortunately the orchestra is already hired for the party, but perhaps next year you can take that over too!"

On New Year's Day Sigmund rose early, dressed, and slipped

out of the house. It had snowed steadily for most of the week and Belisce was muffled in the snow. Huge banks lined the streets; little paths had been trodden, and wandered unevenly. He walked along slowly, his feet crunching, the cold air tingling in his lungs. The village seemed even smaller in the snowfall; the little houses were joined by the fleecy whiteness and the black smoke curling out of the chimneys seemed even blacker in contrast. Holiday decorations were hung from windows and doors and people greeted each other cheerfully from faces hidden in mufflers.

He made his way along the old streets. His eyes sought changes but there were no changes and the sameness of everything about him emphasized the changes within him. He felt almost a visitor in the village where he had spent his entire life.

When he returned home the family was awake and dressed. His father said, "Where have you been?" When he explained that he had waked early and had gone off for a walk, his father went on, "Well, better go upstairs and get dressed."

"I am dressed, Father," he said. "I've got my best suit on."

"Well, go up anyway," Adam Romberg said.

He went to his room. On his bed was a new suit. He changed quickly. The trousers were of a beautiful soft gray cloth and the jacket was a shiny velveteen. With the suit was a new linen shirt with full sleeves and a high stiff collar. He would have been less excited with the suit had he known that he had been within a hair of getting a new suit with long trousers. Adam Romberg wanted to get the l ıg trousers but Mrs. Romberg refused utterly to permit it. "He is getting away from us so swiftly as it is," she had protested. She smiled reproachfully. "Soon you will be offering him an after-dinner cigar."

"Better than all these cigarettes the young people are taking up," Adam had replied. "Someone told me the other day that even young girls are smoking cigarettes in Vienna!"

"Nonsense," Mrs. Romberg had replied. "Not *nice* girls. One always hears stories like that."

But Sigmund knew nothing of the long trousers and he was more than content with what he got. He descended to the dining room happily, and, after a good breakfast to start off the day, the family started out, bundled against the cold, to begin the traditional exchange of visits which preceded the Gutmann ball. They traveled in horsedrawn sleigh, wrapped in blankets; bells jingled an accompaniment to the soft sound of the horses' hoofs. The visiting took all morning, and each visit meant an exchange of toasts in *slivovic,* a high-calibered plum whisky, and each visit was lengthened by reason of the fact that Sigmund had to repeat to all the friends of his parents his various experiences in and impressions of Osiek.

It was shortly before two o'clock in the afternoon when the Rombergs arrived at the Gutmann home. As they approached the large house they could hear the music from within. In front of the house were many of the poorer people of Belisce, gathered to see the guests arrive in their holiday dress. A few cripples and beggars were stationed at the entrance to the park in which the home was set, and the arriving guests tossed coins to them.

In the entrance hall Baron Gutmann greeted them. He was a tall, well-made man with a large rosy face. He put his arm around Adam Romberg warmly and then lifted Mrs. Romberg's hand and kissed it. "Greetings," he boomed in a deep voice. "It is good, as always, to see you here. And here is the wanderer. Sigmund, how are you? How does it feel to be back in the country with simple folk after living in the big city?" He patted the boy jovially and with a sweep of his arm welcomed the Rombergs to his home.

Adam Romberg helped Mrs. Romberg remove her furs. She was dressed in a new gown completed for the occasion by her seamstress and patterned on a model from Vienna. Her hair was

done high on her head in the style favored by the Empress Elizabeth.

Adam Romberg removed a flowing cape and handed it, with his top hat, to a butler. He was wearing a formal afternoon suit.

Many of the guests had already arrived. The women were dressed in colorful costumes, and many of the men were in uniform. Several of the men and women had been brought to Belisce by the Gutmanns for the occasion from Vienna and had been guests at the chateau for the entire holiday week.

A huge dinner was served to start off the party. The meal ended, the guests retired to the living room for the festivities. When he rose from the table Sigmund joined Ernoe Gutmann, eldest son of the baron, an old friend of his. Otto Gutmann and Victor Gutmann, younger brothers, went off with Hugo. Ernoe and Sigmund gravitated toward the orchestra, which was tuning up. Ernoe, who was about the same age as Sigmund, was a tall, fair-haired youth who was an excellent pianist and who went to school in Vienna.

They were listening to the orchestra tuning up when they heard the uniformed majordomo of the Gutmann establishment clap his hands several times and announce that the entertainment was about to begin. In formal, almost archaic language, he requested that the honored and well-born ladies and gentlemen please seat themselves and give their gracious attention to what was about to be presented. The hum and chatter ceased and there was a scraping of chairs. Sigmund and Ernoe separated and found their parents. There was a hush as the room lights were lowered and the orchestra suddenly was flooded with lights.

The scene was something he would never forget, he thought, as he sat quietly next to his father. It was unchanged, except for minor details, year after year, and yet, each time, it seemed fresh and new. It was part of the color of his childhood, something to

be endlessly sought in the years to come, to be grasped at in music as it hovered elusively in his memory.

The players were dressed in Magyar costume, vivid reds and whites and blues, so brilliant that the humans under them were almost lost. The conductor waved his hand and the players broke into a rhythmic dance, from that into a haunting gypsy air, from that into a folk tune. From time to time a man rose and sang the words of the songs. The music was like the champagne the guests drank, sparkling and heady; suddenly it would drop its gaiety and plunge into a mournful refrain, but never ending the refrain, casting it aside as though it were too gloomy for this event, and again hurling intoxicating joy across the room.

When the first part of the program ended the audience broke into shattering applause and the conductor bowed again and again, causing his players to rise and take the applause with him.

Sigmund, who seemed not to have breathed at all during the music, sighed softly. There never was such music. The great symphonies, the great operas, they could do mighty things, but this gypsy music ate into a person's heart.

Following the music, a poem, written for the occasion by Clara Romberg, was read to the gathering. Sigmund, listening to the words his mother had written, felt he would burst with pride.

The majordomo walked on again. It appeared there was to be a special treat. There was a young girl who lived near the village who possessed an unusually beautiful voice. Her name was Mariska Antal and she was the daughter of Tibor and Kati Antal. Tibor was employed by the Baron Gutmann as an inspector on the factory railroad. Mariska was just thirteen and her voice had been discovered by Father Nemes, her confessor, in Valpovo. The priest had arranged for the girl to sing in the church choir and then brought her to the attention of the baron and baroness.

Mrs. Romberg leaned over to her husband and whispered: "I've

heard about this girl. They say she has a great deal of promise, and that the baroness is going to make it possible for her to study in Vienna."

By that time the girl had appeared. She stood in front of the orchestra, nervous, but with a certain composure that was older than her years. Her slender figure, beginning to ripen, was accentuated by her native costume. Her blonde hair was captured in a lacy cap.

The orchestra played a brief introduction and then Mariska started to sing. Her voice was pitched low for a girl her age; it had a deep, almost somber quality that gave the folk song she was singing a dimension that brought tears to the eyes of some of the older women.

When she finished her first number the listeners were won over. They applauded and cried bravo, and the girl, blushing, curtseyed, and then started a second song. She sang song after song, all of them simple folk melodies. She held her hands clasped in front of her; she leaned forward slightly and her face was rapt. She had the quality of seeming to sing her songs not to the audience en masse but to each individual in it.

When she was finally finished, gesturing helplessly to the applauding listeners, Baron Gutmann walked onto the floor and put his arm around her. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "It is not often that we are privileged to listen to a child with a voice like Mariska's. I have the pleasure to tell you that the baroness and I are going to sponsor this child. Her mother and father have consented to allow Mariska to go to Vienna where she will have the benefit of the best instruction there."

The girl listened and then burst into tears. She wiped her eyes and then curtseyed and ran from the room. Baron Gutmann waved to the orchestra, which started to play dance music. The guests rose and the chairs were taken away. Sigmund slipped away. He began a search for the girl. He went from room to room, from the

library to a smaller sitting room, from the sitting room to a small music room. It was there he found her, standing against a window, looking on the park with its deep fall of snow.

"Why did they do it?" he asked abruptly. "You should have stopped singing. That orchestra leader should be whipped."

The girl turned, startled, and said quickly, "Excuse me, sir, I shouldn't be here alone." She hurried out but he blocked her.

"My name is Sigmund Romberg. I should have played for you. I wouldn't have spoiled your songs."

She looked at him. "You could tell?"

"Of course. I am a musician. I play in the orchestra in the Realschule in Osiek."

She forgot her fear. "Was I that bad? I was so frightened."

"You were good. I could tell that even though the orchestra was playing against you."

"Oh, thank you, sir." Her face became radiant. "Do *you* think I can become a singer one day?"

He nodded in a self-assured manner. After all, he was a musician. She was three years older than he but he was, after all, almost a man of the world.

"Oh, I want to do that more than anything else in the world," she said, glowing. Her speaking voice was more childlike than her singing voice and her enthusiasm raised its pitch even higher. "The baroness said that if the teacher in Vienna thought I had real promise she would pay for all my lessons there. Oh, the baroness is such a wonderful lady."

"She is an aunt of mine," said Sigmund, with understandable exaggeration.

"She is?" Mariska asked breathlessly.

"My father is the manager of the factory," Sigmund said casually. "When I finish school in Osiek I'll probably go to Vienna to study too."

"Are you going to be a musician?"

His face fell. "No. I'm studying to be an engineer."

"An engineer? That is a wonderful profession."

"But I'm also a musician," he said fiercely. "I play in our school orchestra. You are supposed to be in your fifth year but they let me play now, even though I just started school there."

"Oh, you must be a wonderful musician for them to do that. What do you play?"

"I can play the piano and violin and the cello, and soon, when I get a little bigger, the bass, too."

She sighed. "I wish I could play the piano. Then I could accompany myself and practice all the time. If we had a piano, I mean." She laughed. "It would have to be a small piano to fit into our home, I think."

"Maybe when I get to Vienna I'll play for you," he said.

She clapped her hands. "Would you?"

He looked around as though someone might be listening, and then he said, in a voice that was low and full of intensity: "I'm studying to be an engineer, but I'm really going to be a musician. My mother and father want me to be an engineer but I don't want to be. I'm going to keep playing and playing and someday I'm going to play in front of people." He looked up and his face suddenly suffused with the force of his dream. "Maybe, someday, I'll conduct an orchestra for you."

The thought was so spellbinding that neither of them could speak for a moment. Then she said suddenly, "Don't let anything interfere." In her sincerity she put her hand on his arm and held it tightly. "Promise me you won't let anything interfere. Oh, I'll study so hard." Her eyes filled with tears again. "It's so wonderful. It's happening just as in a dream. Father Nemes told me I could sing and the baroness listened to me and then my mother and father said I could go to Vienna with the baroness right after the holidays." She paused as though the meaning

suddenly was made clear to her. "I am to leave my home next week."

"I am to leave, too," he said importantly. "I have to return to my classes. I've lived away from home for four months already. The orchestra is going to give a concert in the spring. We charge admission to our concerts."

"Charge admission! That means you are really professionals! Only professional musicians charge admission. One day perhaps people will pay to hear me sing." She swayed slightly with the thought. Then suddenly she raised her head. "My mother must be looking everywhere for me. She told me to meet her in the kitchen right after I sang but I couldn't go there right away. I had to be alone for a little while. I never felt those things before. To be singing for all those ladies and gentlemen and then to have them applaud for me. Applaud for me, Mariska Antal." Her eyes were shining.

Then, so quickly that it was over before he knew what she was about to do, she leaned over with the lightness of a bird and her lips brushed his and then she was gone and he was alone in the room.

3.

The spring term in the Realschule was always to be remembered as the realization of Professor Boggio's dream. When Sigmund returned to school he announced promptly to Professor Boggio that while he would study as faithfully as he could, he had determined quite definitely to follow a career of music. The professor, peering up from his study of a Beethoven score, listened gravely, and then, upon subtle questioning, discovered what had crystallized Sigmund's resolve. He informed Sigmund that it was a praiseworthy ambition indeed, and promised solemnly never to reveal the secret to anyone.

"We will work together toward that end," he said.

"It's just that I have to wait until I grow up a little bit," Sigmund explained.

"Of course, that is the main thing," the professor agreed. "It would help, however, if you increase your study of music. You should understand the problems and possibilities of the different instruments and you should know something about orchestration. All these things will help when you grow up a little bit."

"Will you teach me?" Sigmund asked.

"I will try to teach you as much as I can," the professor agreed.

The pact increased the intimacy between the pair, and it was not long afterward that Professor Boggio and Sigmund exchanged places, and the professor became the confider and the boy the confidant. It seemed there was an ambition the professor had been nurturing secretly for many years. It was a simple ambition and yet one that never seemed possible of realization.

The Emperor of Austria-Hungary was a Roman Catholic and Catholicism was the state religion; it was the duty for all members of the armed forces to attend high mass every Sunday. It also was required that the students attend similar services.

Now in Osiek it had become a custom for the soldiers to make a ceremony of this weekly visit to the church. Every Sunday morning the soldiers lined up in front of their armories and then the Infantry Regiment band would take its position. The band started to play and marched toward the church, followed by the soldiers in parade formation. Behind the soldiers marched the students.

In the course of years the ceremony had become a tradition in Osiek, and on Sunday mornings many hundreds of residents in the city would gather at the parade grounds to witness it. For years now Professor Boggio had attended the parade, and for years he had nursed a burning desire that one day he would have a good enough band in the school to lead the students to church.

His great difficulty was that not enough of the student musicians could play the brass instruments to make up such a band. He had plenty of strings but not enough wind instrument players. In the passage of years he had tried time and again to persuade his string players to learn some brass or woodwind instrument in their spare time. When school let out for the summer, he always gave his most talented students these instruments to take home with them, begging them to learn how to play them during their summer vacations. During the summer months he worried and prayed and hoped, but it never worked out. The students, who had promised readily enough, forgot their promises as soon as they got home, and when they returned to school in the fall they were no more proficient than when they left.

That, Sigmund was told, made up the great dream of Professor Luigi Boggio. If ever he could get enough students to make up a band, if he could get them assembled on the parade grounds on Sunday, if he could see his own student band leading the school to church rather than the military band—well, he would willingly die a happy man.

"And now you are here, my young friend," Professor Boggio concluded. "I have watched how you organized your little groups to serenade the girls. The players have confidence in you. Perhaps, at last, you are here to help me." Then he sighed. "But I guess that it will only remain a dream."

The matter did not seem at all impossible to Sigmund. He had had, as the professor said, some experience in handling his fellow musicians. He made a promise to the professor. In return for the teacher's help in orchestration he would see what he could do to bring about the consummation of the dream.

He thought carefully about the matter and then he planned his argument. First of all, he pointed out to students he had decided were most likely to fall into the scheme, someday everyone would have to serve in the army. A knowledge of how to play a

wind instrument of some kind might prove very useful when that time came in escaping the ordinary onerous tasks of a soldier. Not all military bands were large enough for string sections and a good violin player might find himself assigned to some obscure regiment where his musical ability would be wholly unused. If he could play a trumpet or a flute, however, he would always find a place.

Then he appealed to the school spirit; just imagine, he argued, how jealous the students at the Gymnasium would be when they saw the Realschule students line up on the same field as the military band. And, he added as a capper, think how thrilled the girls in the girls' high school would be.

The argument made sense with enough of the students so that when the spring term was ended a number of the boys took wind instruments away with them after giving their word that this time they would learn how to use them.

Their vows had a different tone to them this time, and Professor Boggio, beside himself with delight but still not daring to hope for too much, gave Sigmund an oldfashioned C-trumpet to be his own extra instrument. Sigmund returned to Belisce for the summer vacation, the precious trumpet under his arm, after promising that he too would learn how to play it.

4.

He returned to Osiek to start his second year at the Realschule a seasoned campaigner. Upon his return he learned that a few of the students actually had made an attempt to learn how to play the wind instruments, and some of them were competent enough to play together in a band. It was almost more than the professor could bear. There was only one discordant note: Sigmund himself, responsible as he was for the activity of the others, had somehow missed the boat. His trumpet-playing was,

to put it as kindly as Professor Boggio could, not of the best.

To him, however, Professor Boggio assigned a place of honor. "You will have the privilege," he announced, "of playing the bass drum. Think of yourself, my boy, marching in the band, pounding the great drum."

Sigmund thought of it. He agreed.

During the next few months the band practiced regularly. Christmas holidays arrived and the spring term started, and then, in March, the professor decided that the band was good enough to give a public performance. The professor called the band together and gave them the big news, that on a Sunday in April the student band would make its first public appearance. As he made the great announcement, the professor removed his toupee and wiped his eyes, which had started to moisten with his happiness. "It is even better than I had ever dared dream," he said with great emotion. "The authorities have been generous beyond my hopes. They have made a great concession. As a mark of their appreciation of the energy and work that went into the organization of the school band they have agreed that the student band may *lead* the parade." He paused. He could hardly go on. "Think of it, gentlemen, you will *lead* the parade." He stood limp, his head slightly bowed, his flowing wig held loosely in his right hand. "And you, you, Sigmund, marching along, pounding your great drum."

Sigmund was staring at him with a peculiar expression on his face. "You mean I have to carry that drum myself?" he asked.

"Of course," the professor said. "What an appearance you will make. Such a small drummer, carrying such a big drum. After seeing you the people will laugh at the regular army drummer."

"I never realized I would be expected to carry that drum from the parade grounds to the church," Sigmund said. "I can't do it."

The professor snapped out of his reverie. "You can't do what, my boy?"

"I won't carry that drum all the way to the church. That drum's heavy."

Professor Boggio rubbed his chin. He looked the boy up and down. "You *are* somewhat small for that," he agreed. "I had not thought about it."

"I didn't think about it either," Sigmund said. "I should have learned how to play the piccolo."

Professor Boggio thought. Then he slapped his forehead. "I have the solution," he exclaimed. "The military band has a little two-wheel wagon for their drum. You have seen it, pulled by a pony. They only use the pony and wagon on long marches. I have never seen them use it at the Sunday ceremonies. I will ask Sergeant Menges to lend us the wagon."

"Well," Sigmund said. "I won't mind walking behind the wagon at all."

Sergeant Menges, when approached, readily agreed to lend the wagon. However, he refused to lend the pony. "The pony has been trained to march with our soldiers," he said. "I cannot take a chance that somehow something may happen if I let you have him for your band. The wagon, yes. The pony, no."

Professor Boggio returned to the school. "I have it," he told Sigmund glumly. "But only the wagon. Not the pony."

"Who is going to pull the wagon?"

"I don't know yet," the professor admitted. "But I will find a way out."

Several days passed during which there seemed to be no solution to the problem. The professor walked around with a bleak face. He was convinced that he was cursed. Here he was so close to his goal, and yet so far away. Everything was ready, the students were rehearsed, the day was set. And yet there could be no band without a drum and Sigmund refused absolutely to haul

the drum in his arms. He tried it, before the professor, and the morose teacher was forced to admit the boy was just too small to manage it, even if he had wanted to.

One evening Professor Boggio was sitting in a cafe, trying to find some forgetfulness. He sipped his rich beer and stared into the foamy collar as though somehow the answer to his troubles might be contained in it. He shook the beer mug back and forth and watched the foam make lacy patterns. He sighed dolorously. There seemed no solution.

He heard a loud shout, "Luigi, my friend! And sitting alone. I will join you."

There was no need for him to look up. He recognized the voice. "Hello, Sandor," he said courteously. "Certainly, join me."

The man who sat down next to him, after clapping his back with a blow that shook the fleshless professor's teeth, was an enormous blackhaired man in uniform. He roared to a waitress to bring two more beers and then turned a red, slightly perspiring face to the professor. "And how are you tonight, Luigi?" he asked. "I saw you sitting here alone with a black look on your face and I said to myself, that man looks unhappy and when a man is unhappy, who does he want near him, I asked myself, and I answered, an old friend. So here I am, Luigi."

"Thank you, Sandor," Professor Boggio said. He could not possibly imagine anyone he less wanted near him in his present frame of mind. Lieutenant Sandor Toldy was an officer in the Infantry Regiment. He had an abiding complaint. Like most Hungarians, Lieutenant Toldy was a superb horseman; he loved horses as he loved nothing else in the world. He joined the army so he could ride horses and almost went mad when he found himself in an infantry regiment for the reason that there was a strict infantry rule that forbade any officer below the rank of captain from owning his own horse. In the cavalry, his favorite theme was, even the privates ride, but in the infantry only the

captains and higher officers can have horses. It was an old tale of woe and one that he belabored every listener with, and Professor Boggio, with his own sorrows, wanted nothing as little as listening again to Lieutenant Toldy.

It did not take Lieutenant Toldy long to embark. "Did you hear how the colonel sent me to a horse auction to buy him an animal?" he demanded after he finished his second stein of beer.

"No, I had not, Sandor," Professor Boggio said wearily.

"Could he go and select his own horse?" Lieutenant Toldy demanded. "No, he had to send me, Sandor Toldy, because he knows I know more about horses than anyone in the regiment."

"Did you buy the horse?"

"Ha! Did I buy a horse. Yes, my good Luigi, I bought a horse. And such a horse. The finest horse offered at the auction. A beauty of a horse. A dream of a horse. Half-Arabian, he is." He drank half a seidel in one gulp, wiped the foam from his mustache, and jabbed a long, powerful finger into the frail professor's chest. "But, Luigi, can the colonel ride him? No, of course not. Only I, Sandor Toldy, can ride him. And why? Because he is not broken enough for the colonel. He is not used to street noises. A sound makes him rear. The streetcars cause him to bolt. A little child can whistle and he runs. So the colonel cannot ride him. So, after buying the horse, now I must break him in so the colonel can ride him."

"How happy you must be," Professor Boggio said without interest. "Now at least you can get enough riding."

"Happy? Happy you say?" Lieutenant Toldy finished his beer and ordered more. He lifted his eyes to heaven to show how put-upon he was. "Certainly I can ride him. As much as I want. But can I ride him in front of troops like an officer of His Imperial Majesty's Army? No. Alone. I must ride him alone. Not in front of my soldiers but alone in side streets, like a criminal. Until such

a day when I have him trained enough for the colonel to mount him and ride him at the head of the regiment. And then they will say how beautifully the colonel rides. And I. What will I be doing at that time?" He gritted his teeth. "I will be walking. Me, *walking!*" No one could put such tones of disgust in that simple word.

Professor Boggio wondered how long it would be before the lieutenant would go. On this night he could not even pretend to be a sympathetic listener.

"The colonel rides," the lieutenant said sarcastically. "I respect the colonel. He is my commanding officer. He is a brave man. But can he ride? Ha! He couldn't ride Heinz."

"Who?" Professor Boggio asked. He had been only half-listening.

"I said the colonel could not ride my dog Heinz if I put a saddle on him."

"Oh, Heinz. Your St. Bernard. And how is Heinz?" Professor Boggio asked, to change the subject.

"Heinz is fine," Lieutenant Toldy said.

"A wonderful dog," Professor Boggio said. He looked up suddenly. "Heinz. Your St. Bernard dog. Your powerful St. Bernard dog. God in heaven, Sandor. I have it." He grabbed the lieutenant by the shoulders. "I have it!" he yelled.

"You have what, man. Have you gone crazy?"

Professor Boggio kissed the lieutenant on both cheeks. "Sandor, you are my savior. Listen to me. My old, good friend, listen to me."

5.

The great day arrived at last. It was a warm, sunny day. The spring rains had fallen persistently for days before and Professor Boggio had scanned the skies, wondering whether the

gods too were conspiring against him. But the Sunday dawned fair with a sweet feeling of spring, and at the appointed time the students of the Realschule marched proudly to their positions in the great yard. Everything had been planned carefully. The students had no uniforms, naturally, but Professor Boggio had taken that into consideration as well. He had instructed the students to wear the closest thing they had to uniforms, their sports dress: white sweaters and dark trousers. The dean of the school had demurred at this at first, suggesting that such costume was hardly appropriate for church, but the professor had insisted that the military would be in uniform and that the students had, in one way or another, to achieve a similar unanimity of appearance. A faculty meeting had been summarily called and the professor pleaded his case. Permission had been dubiously granted. But now, as the students were gathered in military formation, their gleaming sweaters making vivid contrast to the dark trousers, everyone admitted the adamant professor had indeed been correct. Even the dean nodded smilingly to him.

The streets filled rapidly. The crowd which usually attended the military ceremony was, on this day, augmented by hundreds of other persons attracted by the novelty of the student band. As the spectators watched, the student players marched out to their positions. The citizens applauded loudly and then broke into cheers as the student drummer appeared.

Sigmund walked behind his drum wagon, his drumstick at his side. Pulling the wagon was Heinz, the great St. Bernard. The dog hauled the wagon easily, trotting with his head high, as though he understood he was on exhibition.

Professor Boggio watched the band assemble with radiant face. He rubbed his hands together, removing his wig again and again in his emotion. When he saw how perfectly the dog moved the wagon he wanted to cry in his joy.

When the students were in position, there was a sharp sounding of the military bugle, and the soldiers, in dress uniforms, marched out of their armories and formed their ranks. Then the military band took its position, and before the eyes of the spectators the two groups, soldiers and students, each with its own band, stood at attention in the bright morning sunlight. It was a memorable sight and the spectators cheered and clapped their hands and Professor Boggio, standing among the faculty members, thought his heart would burst.

It would have seemed that nothing could be added to the splendor of the occasion. But there was still to be another touch. When both groups were ready to begin the march, the door to the infantry armory opened and out bounded the great steed recently purchased for the colonel, and astride the animal was Lieutenant Sandor Toldy.

Now the spectators cheered again and Lieutenant Toldy put the horse through its paces. He trotted the horse up and down, broke it into a canter, brought it to a stop. His horsemanship was perfect and the audience was in a frenzy.

This little act had been planned secretly by the lieutenant. He had studied the army regulations and had read the passage forbidding an officer of his rank in the infantry from riding a horse in a military exercise. But the regulation said nothing about riding a horse to church. When Lieutenant Toldy had been assigned to lead the soldiers to church that day he had conceived the notion of leading them on horseback. He had prepared the excuse, if dressed-down by the colonel, that he was only using this means of breaking in the animal to the sounds of the cymbals and drums.

When the lieutenant finished with his demonstration the ceremony was ready to begin. At a signal from Professor Boggio, the leader of the student band raised his wand and with a sharp downward motion started the band off. Sigmund, standing behind the wagon which was harnessed to the dog, watched, and at

the proper moment crashed his stick against the drum. At the same moment the cymbals crashed and a moment later Heinz gave forth a frenzied howl and bolted.

Heinz dashed madly through the ranks of students and Sigmund ran after him, waving his arms wildly. The student band, for want of anything better to do, followed. Within the space of a few seconds the carefully positioned band turned into a yelling mob of boys, chasing another boy who in turn was chasing a dog pulling a wagon with a huge drum.

Lieutenant Toldy, waiting at the head of his soldiers, roared with laughter. At the same time he signaled for the military band to start *its* playing. As soon as the soldiers thundered into sound the fiery horse reared. Lieutenant Toldy, watching the running student band, was caught unaware. Almost thrown, he recovered himself and tried to quiet the wild animal.

His laugh had been heard by another. Heinz, careening along, swerved toward the familiar sound of his master's voice. He charged at the lieutenant, who was having his hands full trying to keep his seat. Seeing his owner, at last, the dog leaped into the air to get at him. This last proved too much for both Lieutenant Toldy and the horse.

With a great convulsive shudder, the horse reared and doubled up in an attempt to get away from the shaggy monster that was trying to jump on it, wagon and all. With the last rebound, Lieutenant Toldy lost his seat. He described a perfect parabola and landed with a clatter, his dress sword sending up sparks from the cobbled street. The spectators, in the habit now, applauded again.

III

He grunted with exertion as he walked up the steep street. It was early autumn but the wind that came down from the mountains was cool and felt pleasant against his face. As he walked, he observed with pleasure the sight of his legs, now covered for the first time to his shoes with long trousers.

It was in the fall of 1901. The previous spring he had completed his fourth year in the Realschule and his father had arranged for him to begin his next semester in the mountain town of Pecs, or Fünfkirchen, as it was known in German. The change was made because only the Croat language was used in Osiek and the Rombergs had felt Sigmund should study with Hungarian instructors.

The change had been hard at first. Pecs was a much greater distance from Belisce, to start with. And after four years Sigmund had become well established in Osiek. He was a respected member of the school orchestra and had his own little bands on an excellent basis. He had made many friends and, as the years had passed, he had grown increasingly closer to Professor Boggio, who had never tired of passing on his own musical knowledge to the insatiable boy. Having to say farewell to his old teacher had been particularly affecting, and when he left the old man's study

for the last time he had felt that a part of himself had been left behind.

To make the departure for Pecs easier for him to take, Mr. and Mrs. Romberg had presented him with his first long-trousered suit. He trudged along the hilly streets and finally reached the place where he lived. He boarded with the family of Professor Sosvari, one of the high-school instructors. He greeted Mrs. Sosvari and then went to his room. He sat at his desk and started a letter to Professor Boggio.

> How often I think of you and of all the good times we had together. Who helps you with your musical library now? I always remember the things you taught me, and the love and respect for music you helped me feel is something I shall never forget.
>
> You will be pleased to hear that only a few weeks after I arrived here I organized a small orchestra in the high school. I kept thinking how proud you would be to know how I was putting your lessons to use! It is really a gypsy band. We have about eighteen musicians, mostly fiddles, basses, and a cimbalom. I lead the orchestra and play first fiddle.
>
> I have tried my hand at making my own orchestrations—and how helpful it was to have your instructions in this matter. It has created quite a bit of enthusiasm, not only among the musicians but also among the faculty members when we gave our first concert in the school auditorium. The orchestra is not subsidized as was ours in Osiek so whatever teaching has to be done has to be done by me.
>
> This is an interesting town and I am beginning to like it better, although I miss Osiek so much! There is no river

here, but instead we are on a mountain, and hardly a street is on level ground. Even the school is built on terraces. We have a wonderful military band—the 52nd Infantry. There also is an officers' training school, a home guard regiment, and a cavalry regiment. (How Lieutenant Toldy would love that regiment!) The theatre is very good, better than Osiek, I think.

My musical work is not limited to my little orchestra. At our school there is a professional singing teacher who leads the school choir at mass every Sunday. I now play the organ for him in church. He also has an organ in his home, and he allows me to go there often and practice. I have become quite proficient, foot pedals and all.

I hope that before too long we shall see each other again. Meanwhile I shall send you some of the orchestrations I have attempted. If you have the time I would appreciate it if you would correct them. I know how amateurish they must be. I get such a strange feeling making these orchestrations, putting together all the sounds the instruments will make. And when we are playing and I realize that each instrument is playing what I have put down, I almost want to dance.

With all my affection, your old pupil,
Sigmund.

2.

Soon after Sigmund returned to Belisce for his summer vacation at the end of his first year in Pecs, his parents took the two children to Poszega to visit an aunt of Adam Romberg. One afternoon Adam announced that he had been asked to participate in a concert for a local charitable organization. Adam

reported the news pleasantly, since he was rather proud of his reputation as an amateur pianist. "I am to accompany some local gentleman named Chavrack," he said. "I believe he is one of the musicians around here. He plays a cello." He glanced at his aunt. "Do you know of a Chavrack, Aunt Louise?"

His aunt, a plump, white-haired lady, pursed her lips. "Chavrack, Chavrack," she repeated. "I only know one Chavrack, I believe. He is the local fish merchant."

"Fish merchant!" Adam said. "Well, there must be another Chavrack around, Aunt Louise. And I thought you knew all the musicians in Poszega." He lit a cigar. "Well, in any case, he must be a musician of some accomplishment. He is going to give a cello solo and I'm to accompany him." Adam looked at his watch. It was just after two in the afternoon. "Ladies," he said, "you must excuse me. My card partners await me."

"Don't you get tired playing cards every afternoon?" his aunt said, shaking her head.

"I just don't want to get in the way of you two ladies gossiping," he laughed.

The following day the family just finished lunch when a servant appeared. "I beg your pardon, sir," she said to Adam Romberg. "But there is a gentleman to see you." She said the word *gentleman* with an odd intonation, sniffing loudly.

"Well, show him in, Bertha," Aunt Louise said instantly. "He's just in time to have coffee with us."

The maid curtseyed. "It's Chavrack, the fish man, mum," she said.

"Show Mr. Chavrack in," Aunt Louise told the maid.

Mr. Chavrack appeared in the dining room, his hat in his hand, himself surrounded by a faint effluvia of fish. He bowed low to Aunt Louise and then to Mrs. Romberg and then he turned to Adam Romberg. "How do you do, sir," he said.

"How do you do, Mr. Chavrack," Adam said.

"I was told that you are going to play for me at the concert," Chavrack said. "I'm the cello player."

Adam Romberg took a deep breath. "So you're the cellist," he said. "Well, sit down and have a cup of coffee."

"Thank you," Chavrack said. He looked at Aunt Louise. She nodded affirmation. He sat down on the edge of a seat, still holding his hat. By now the odor of fish permeated the entire room.

"Well, what can I do for you?" Adam said.

"It's this way, Mr. Romberg," Chavrack said. "I thought we ought to practice."

"Practice? I don't need practice. I'm always in practice," Adam said.

"But I'm not," Chavrack explained. "My fish business keeps me pretty busy. I sell only the best fish. You folks all know that. There's no one in Poszega who sells better fish than Chavrack."

"You sell excellent fish," Aunt Louise agreed gravely.

"That's just it," Chavrack said eagerly. "I'm so busy with my business that I don't have time enough to keep in practice." He looked up triumphantly. "But I have it all arranged now. I got an assistant for the next two weeks to come in the store in the afternoons. That will give me every afternoon to rehearse." He grinned broadly. "I have my cello with me and we can start today. We can rehearse all afternoon."

"Well, that's just it," Adam said. "I have an engagement this afternoon."

Chavrack's face fell. He was a roundfaced man whose fat cheeks pushed against a pair of tiny eyes. When he became disappointed his face looked like that of an overgrown baby from whom a piece of candy had been taken. "Well, if you're busy, you're busy," he said. "You're here on a vacation, so how can you be busy? But if you're busy, you're busy." He sighed. "Well, we can start tomorrow. I'm going to need all the practice I can get."

Adam's face was filled with pain. "I'm rather busy tomorrow too," he said weakly.

"Busy tomorrow too?" Now Chavrack began to get heated. "But you have promised to play at the concert. It's for charity."

"I know," Adam said helplessly. "But I didn't understand that I would have to rehearse every afternoon."

"I'm a plain workingman, Mr. Romberg," Chavrack said. "I don't have time to keep up with my music like a man of leisure."

"Oh, I understand perfectly," Adam said. He looked around the table again. When his eyes fell on Sigmund they remained there and then suddenly began to twinkle. "I have it, Mr. Chavrack. I think we can solve this little problem."

"You mean you'll practice with me?" Chavrack said, his face all smiles again.

"My son will practice with you," Adam said.

"What!" Sigmund shouted.

"Your son? Is he good?" Chavrack asked dubiously.

"My son is almost as good as I am, Mr. Chavrack," Adam said blandly. "And he loves music. There is nothing he would rather do than make music. And he has nothing whatsoever to do. He will be at your disposal every afternoon."

"But it's *you* I got to give the concert with," Chavrack insisted.

"We can arrange for that, too," Adam said. He puffed on his cigar and then, with an expansive gesture of his hand, he went on: "On the last two afternoons before the concert I shall arrange my affairs so that I am free. We will rehearse for those two afternoons so that I may be able to become familiar with your style."

Chavrack beamed at the word *style*. He lowered his head modestly. "Anything you say, Mr. Romberg," he said.

"Good. Then it is all arranged." He looked innocently at Sigmund. "When you are finished, my boy, go with Mr. Chavrack to the music room and rehearse with him."

Each afternoon Sigmund played the piano for Chavrack. He found that Chavrack indeed needed practice. Chavrack, he decided privately, needed more than practice. Chavrack needed another pair of hands. The huge fish peddler curled around the instrument as though he were afraid it was going to run away from him. He played slowly and patiently, tapping his right foot steadily to keep the beat.

After a week Adam, who had ordered that there was to be no discussion about the rehearsals, brought up the subject himself. The family had just concluded dinner and Adam, sipping some brandy, asked Sigmund how the rehearsals were coming along.

"Terribly," Sigmund said.

"So? Well, I'm sure that you are helping him. And you must be enjoying it as well. You do like to play the piano, don't you?"

"Father—" Sigmund started.

"Adam, you're awful," Aunt Louise said.

"Sigmund would rather play the piano than eat," Adam maintained. "Wouldn't you, my boy? By the way, I met Chavrack today. He is a little concerned. He doesn't feel sure that he will be in shape in time for the concert. I suggested that perhaps it might help matters along if you two rehearsed *twice* a day. He said he would get his assistant to come in the mornings too. So you will have an opportunity to play with him in the forenoons as well."

"But, Father," Sigmund protested, "I'm here on my vacation too."

"Well, isn't playing a piano a vacation for you?"

It was at that moment Sigmund planned revenge.

On the night of the concert, held in a local armory, the crowd gathered early. Chavrack, in a dress suit that smelled of mothballs, making an interesting combination with the fine aroma of fish that always accompanied him, walked up and down behind

the closed curtains. "Do you think it's going to be all right, Mr. Romberg?" he asked anxiously.

"Why, certainly. You will be a great success. More people will buy fish from you than ever before."

Chavrack rubbed his perspiring hands against each other. "I'm sorry I got into this," he said.

"Nonsense," Adam said heartily. "Come, my friend. Let's go outside and have a smoke. It will settle you."

He put his arm around Chavrack and led him from the stage. That was the moment Sigmund had waited for. As soon as the two men were out of sight he hurried to the cello. A little later he slipped off the stage and went around into the audience. He sat down next to his aunt and mother and waited placidly.

Presently the lights were dimmed. The curtains parted. Adam Romberg and Chavrack were alone on the stage. There was a burst of applause. Adam bowed his head. Chavrack bent almost to his toes. Upon receiving a nod from the fish merchant, Adam went into a flourishing introduction. At the moment called for in the score, Chavrack, with a broad grin on his face, came in with the cello. The first few notes seemed to be all right but then Chavrack appeared to be in trouble. He kept looking at his left hand, the one he used for fingering, in utter bewilderment. Adam, playing along, looked over and frowned. Suddenly Chavrack pushed the cello aside and leaped to his feet. "I'm stuck!" he shouted. "I'm stuck!" Then, in sudden panic, he realized he was on stage. He bowed and rushed away, holding out his left hand as though it were contaminated.

When the audience stopped laughing, Adam said, shrugging: "Something had evidently caused Mr. Chavrack to become temporarily indisposed. If you ladies and gentlemen have no objection, I will attempt to play a few piano solos in place of the program planned originally."

When Adam finished his impromptu performance and the

curtain was drawn, he went over to the cello. He examined the neck of the instrument closely. As he had suspected from Chavrack's antics, the neck had been thoroughly rubbed with resin. With a determined expression on his face, he went to find his son.

3.

Pecs, January 23, 1903

My dearest Mariska,

The last few days have passed as though in a dream. I can close my eyes and see you standing again in the great room at the Gutmanns', as you did that other New Year's Day five long years ago. But how different it was this time! I remember that first time when you said you were so frightened. You were so little and, as you told me later, so uncomfortable in front of the 'great ladies and gentlemen.' But this time! Oh, this time, Mariska, the 'great ladies and gentlemen' were outshone by the lovely lady from Vienna. How far you have come in five years. With your hair done in the new upswept manner and that gorgeous Viennese dress you were like some creature from fairyland among all those brilliant guests.

It is so thrilling to know that you are singing at last in a theatre in Vienna. And I too am keeping up with my music. I am quite a skillful conductor now, everyone thinks, and my orchestrations are getting better all the time. It will be no time at all, after I join you in Vienna, before I have an orchestra of my own, playing for you!

And don't think I am overly optimistic! It is not conceit to know one's powers. Daily I feel more and more sure of myself in my grasp of the orchestra. I keep correcting

my mistakes—and with the help of my old friend, Professor Boggio, in Osiek, who reads all of my orchestrations and corrects them as he thinks best—I grow more and more able to make the kind of music that is in my head come out from the orchestra exactly as I want it. Each instrument has its own voice and it must speak at exactly the right time and in exactly the right way and my ear grows keener all the time. . . . . .

4.

When Agnes Balogh transferred her affections from Sigmund to another student it caused a great scandal in the high school. It was not the changeover itself that caused any surprise, since Agnes was notorious for her love of variety and she had remained faithful to Sigmund rather longer than was normal. What caused heated discussion among the students was that Agnes had taken as a new favorite one of the boys from the rival high school. This was considered an insult to the student body as a whole.

Agnes was a blonde, and Sigmund had teased himself with the notion that she reminded him of Mariska. She wore her hair in long braids, formed in a circle over each ear, and the tight-fitting bodices she wore were well suited to display her natural charms. She was a barmaid in a weinstube, that the students visited, and had, hitherto, confined her romances to students of Sigmund's school.

Sigmund thought that the aberration was only temporary. "It is easy for me to understand her flirting," he told a group of friends. "But she wouldn't dare make eyes at anyone from the Gymnasium. Agnes is loyal to the Realschule!"

"I hope you are right," Joszi Sakardi, his best friend, said uncertainly. "But Ilonka told me that she saw Agnes and a boy

named Zsofi Juhasz out together the other night. And Zsofi Juhasz, as we all know, is one of the track stars at the Gymnasium."

"We'll make him show how he can run," one of the students said dangerously.

"That is not the way," Sigmund demurred. "And, after all, if this is the case, which I still doubt, then I am the affronted one and I should decide the revenge."

"The school is affronted," the student shouted.

"Only secondarily," Sigmund said. "I am the chief sufferer."

"That is true," the student admitted.

"First we have to verify the matter," Sigmund said. "I will take care of that."

Within a few days the truth of the case was established beyond argument. Agnes Balogh had quite definitely become enamored of Zsofi Juhasz and made no bones about it. The students at the Realschule were up in arms. Sigmund promised the outraged students that he would think up a suitable revenge.

One afternoon shortly thereafter, Sigmund, in a final attempt to win back the girl to himself and the school, asked Agnes if she would accompany him to a party the following Saturday night. Agnes, leaning over the bar temptingly, made a pretty face. "Oh, Sigmund, I would love to," she said. "But I have to go to bed early Saturday night. I have to catch a train at five o'clock the next morning. My mother and I are going to visit an aunt of mine in the country."

On Thursday and Friday evenings after working hours, however, Agnes had no need to be in bed early, and during these nights, Sigmund ascertained, she spent her time with the rival athlete. The Realschule students held a conference. Plans were laid. On that Saturday evening Zsofi Juhasz, to his astonishment, was invited to the big party. It was the first time that a boy from the rival school had been so honored. Zsofi interpreted this as a

testimonial to his athletic prowess and he arrived at the party in good spirits.

Zsofi, a tall, long-legged young man, was greeted warmly by the welcoming committee, comprising Sigmund, Jozsi, and one or two others. He was complimented on his great accomplishments both on the athletic field and in the arena of romance.

"Thanks, fellows," he said modestly. "You're pretty good lads. I thought you would be sore about Agnes and me."

"Sore?" Sigmund clapped him on the back. "All's fair in love and war, isn't it?"

"That's right," Zsofi said. "All's fair."

"Have a drink," Jozsi said.

"We'll all have a drink," Sigmund said.

Zsofi's last suspicions were routed when he tasted the wine, which was excellent. When he finished his glass he was handed another, and urged to tell of his exploits on the track. Eight glasses of wine later, he finished recounting the last of his great victories, and by then he was primed enough to respond to requests that he tell of his experiences with the lovely Agnes. By midnight there was no need to make him talk in order to make him drink. Zsofi simply accepted each glass of wine that was handed to him and drained it.

At four-thirty in the morning Zsofi was beyond all pain. He was in a heavenly world of his own in which he raced endlessly around a track chasing Agnes. He was carried tenderly to the railroad station and deposited on a bench in the waiting room and given another glass of wine.

Fifteen minutes later, demure and shy in the presence of her mother, Agnes entered the waiting room. Zsofi looked up. He saw his beloved. He staggered to his feet. With a wild roar he descended on the girl. Mrs. Balogh screamed and tried to shelter her daughter. Zsofi pushed her aside violently.

"Agnes, my darling, you have come to me," he shouted. "I finally caught you on the third time around the track."

He swept the girl into his arms, kissing her noisily.

"Agnes!" her mother screamed.

"Mother!"

"My darling, I've caught you at last," Zsofi bellowed. He laid his head upon her shoulder, and, still standing, fell quietly asleep.

The girl let him slide to the floor. The train arrived. "Come along, Agnes," Mrs. Balogh said. "I want to ask you some questions."

Agnes took a last look at her sleeping lover and climbed aboard the train. Her mother pushed her inside.

It was not later than Monday night that the girl returned her affections to Sigmund and agreed that henceforth she would have nothing, nothing at all, to do with anyone else.

"At least," Sigmund said severely, "not with anyone who is not a student at the right school."

IV

SIGMUND, now seventeen, stood outside the office of the dean, fingering his tie nervously. He wondered just what particular escapade had caused the head of the school to summon him. It couldn't be the business with Malvina, he had been very discreet about that. Presently the door opened and the dean's secretary appeared. She was a sallow creature with a bad complexion. She glared at Sigmund and motioned for him to enter. He shrugged his shoulders philosophically and walked past her, wincing at the odor of the atrocious perfume with which she flooded herself.

Inside the office he came to attention. Dean Gaspard Kende, who doubled as head of the school and professor of physics, was bent over his desk. His face was pale with anxiety. The matter must be something serious, Sigmund thought. He cleared his throat. "You sent for me, sir?"

The dean, a tired old man, continued to stare at his desk. Sigmund could make out an official document there. His mind raced. This did look serious. He waited. At last the old man raised his eyes. Then, his hands trembling, and still not uttering a word, he lifted the large square envelope from his desk and handed it to the youth as though the paper were red-hot. On the envelope was

the inscription, 'Master Sigmund Romberg, Realschule, Szeged.' What made the envelope so frightening to the dean was the large red wax seal: the Imperial seal of Emperor Franz Josef.

"What is this, Romberg?" the dean asked in a quavering voice.

Sigmund closed his eyes and felt a wave of relief. He knew exactly what the envelope was about. He accepted it with nonchalance, as though there were nothing at all surprising in his receiving a personal letter from the Emperor. "May I sit down?" he asked.

The dean nodded feebly. Sigmund seated himself and before the terrified eyes of the dean he opened the envelope.

The cause went back somewhat. At the end of his seventh grade in Pecs, with but one more year to go before graduation and the Matura, Sigmund had again been transferred by his parents to another school in another city, this time to the Hungarian city of Szeged.

Upon arriving there Sigmund, almost automatically, had looked into the orchestra situation in the school. There was an outfit of some twenty-two students, but it was without a conductor. It was a lackadaisical group which met infrequently. Sigmund set to work.

It so happened in that particular year the Hungarian Red Cross inaugurated a drive to raise funds for hospital equipment and the honorary patroness for the drive was the Grand Duchess Clothilde, sister to the Emperor.

Flushed with his success in whipping the school orchestra together, Sigmund had taken it into his head to compose what he called a 'Red Cross March.' He had, from time to time, written earlier things, had once composed a sonata for violin and piano, but this was the first piece of music he had ever written to be played publicly. He set the composition to paper and then, on an

impulse, had sent the manuscript to the Grand Duchess with a letter asking permission to dedicate the march to her. Several months had passed and he had almost forgotten about the march.

However, the fund-raising in Szeged was to be climaxed, in the near future, with a huge ceremony, including a bazaar, benefit performance, and ball, and the rumor was that the Grand Duchess herself would officiate at the affair. With the announcement of the ceremony, Sigmund had wondered what had happened to his music, and now, in the dean's office, he had his answer.

He opened the envelope and then read, in the handwriting of the Grand Duchess, that she was pleased to accept both the march and the dedication. She signed the letter personally.

In very casual tones, Sigmund explained to the dean what he had done. Dean Kende rose and walked around the desk. He studied Sigmund for a few moments as though he were seeing a stranger, and then he placed his hand on his shoulder and said in solemn tones, "My boy, you have brought to your school the highest honor in its long history."

He returned to his chair and sat down heavily, exhausted, and he made no motion as Sigmund picked up the letter and asked for permission to leave. As the youth backed slowly out of the room, however, the dean lifted his head and asked: "Could you . . . would it be possible . . . could you leave the letter here for a little while? I would like to read it again . . . it is not often . . ."

2.

Within twenty-four hours news of the extraordinary event had spread throughout Szeged. It no longer was a personal honor, visited upon an individual, of course, but an Imperial grace that was bestowed upon the entire city.

Sigmund was boarding at the time with a family named

Karolyi, and in that household he was now regarded with a positive awe. The reaction everywhere was quite pleasant and Sigmund began to wonder how he might turn all this excitement to his greater advantage.

The following evening he received the first official sign of the ferment in the town. At the home of the Karolyis appeared Madame Aladar Garay, wife of one of the members of the Hungarian Parliament and daughter of a local department store owner. Madame Garay was built like a horse and moved like a tornado. When she passed things were left limp in her wake. She burst into the Karolyi home and ordered, "Show him to me. Show me our young musical genius. I must see him instantly!"

The Karolyis, unused to such important visitors, hastened to conduct her to Sigmund's room. She flung open the door without bothering to knock, and rushed in. She grabbed the astonished youth and swept him into her arms with the assurance of a wife of a member of the Diet and daughter of the wealthiest man in Szeged. "This is our treasure," she shouted, half-smothering the treasure. "This is the boy who has brought such honor to our city." She released the youth, who gulped immediately for air, and surveyed him. "Sigmund Romberg," she intoned. "Szeged will never forget you." She lowered her head as though she were praying.

Sigmund looked over her massive shoulder to the Karolyis and was amazed to see their heads were lowered too. Dutifully, he lowered his own.

Madame Garay began to give orders. "Sigmund, you will come with me immediately to the home of Dean Kende. The entire committee is waiting there. We are making plans for the performance of your beautiful, beautiful piece of music."

"You have heard it, then?" Sigmund enquired.

"Of course not," Madame Garay said, waving her hand. "But

if the Duchess Clothilde accepted it, it must be a monumental composition."

"It's just a little march," Sigmund said.

Madame Garay was shocked. "Are you contradicting the Grand Duchess Clothilde?"

"No, of course not."

"Good. Let us go." She swept the boy out of the home and into a waiting carriage. A few minutes later she swept him out of the carriage into the home of the dean. More than a score of men and women were inside.

"Here he is," Madame Garay shouted triumphantly. "I have brought our young musical genius. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Sigmund Romberg!"

There was applause. Sigmund bowed courteously. He looked for Dean Kende. The old man was beaming, his pale, weak eyes sparkling.

"It is all settled," Madame Garay informed everyone present. "Sigmund will teach his magnificent orchestra this beautiful composition so that on the day of the affair, in the event that the Grand Duchess honors us with her presence, she may hear this music written for her. Dean Kende has agreed that you may take as much time as necessary for rehearsals so that there will be no chance of anything going wrong."

Sigmund's mind was working very carefully. He had given a great deal of thought to the entire situation and he deemed this an excellent time to try his strength. With the ladies and gentlemen standing in happy expectation and Dean Kende nodding his head with unconcealed approval, he said, "I am afraid it is impossible."

There was a long silence, long enough for individual expressions of consternation to replace the happiness on each face. Madame Garay leaned forward dangerously. "What is this that you are saying, young man?"

"I said it is impossible," he replied calmly.

"And why is it impossible?"

"I have only eighteen young boys in my orchestra," Sigmund said. "I had a few more but that is all that are left. They are all string players. I have composed a march. A march needs drums, brass, woodwinds, to do it justice. Now, mind you, I do not say that my march is a great piece of music. On the contrary. It was just my humble offering to Her Imperial Highness." He paused and lowered his head respectfully, then continued. "But the Grand Duchess, who in her wisdom undoubtedly knows how a march should be played, having listened to the finest bands in the army, knows that music of this type needs more than a few strings. It would be an insult to Her Highness to greet her with a march played by a string orchestra. She would think Szeged knew no better."

It was not Madame Garay's nature to admit there was anything she did not know about. "The boy is absolutely right," she said. "A march needs more than just a few strings. But I am certain these difficulties can be surmounted. Nothing is impossible under capable leadership. I know that every authority in Szeged will support you in whatever requests you make to ensure the success of the enterprise." Everyone nodded violently.

Sigmund nodded as though somewhat reassured. It was going well. Now he took another step. "But there are other problems," he said. "I have no time to spend rehearsing an orchestra so that it will reach the degree of excellence necessary before its efforts can be brought to the ears of Her Imperial Highness. The Matura is approaching, you know, and I am just a student who is trying to pass his examinations and not bring dishonor upon his family or his school." He smiled disarmingly. "I would *like* to spend twenty-four hours a day with the orchestra for this great occasion, but unfortunately I am not clever enough to study for the Matura and rehearse at the same time. Perhaps someone else can be

found who can orchestrate the music and also do the job of conducting."

At this point everyone turned to Dean Kende. The dean rose to the occasion. Without hesitation he announced in ringing tones, "Matura or no Matura, you will rehearse the orchestra and play for the Grand Duchess! *Excelsior!*"

3.

His Excellency, General of the Cavalry, Count Elek Farago, was the highest ranking military officer in Szeged. He also was the father of Count Andras Farago, a close friend of Sigmund and a violinist in the school orchestra. A rather vague old gentleman who lived in the past, who worshipped his Emperor to the extent of wearing the out-curling sideburns made famous by Franz Josef, General Farago seldom was informed of things happening in Szeged until they were passed. He had heard some incomprehensible talk about a piece of music and a charity affair but very little else. He was astonished, therefore, when his son informed him one afternoon that a student, named Sigmund Romberg, had requested the honor of an audience.

General Farago, in his huge office in an armory, tugged at his sideburns in a puzzled manner and asked his son why this student wanted to see him.

"It's about the orchestra, Father," Andras said.

"What orchestra?"

"The school orchestra."

"What have I to do with the school orchestra?"

"It has to do with the concert."

"What concert?"

"The concert for charity."

"What have I got to do with the concert for charity?" the

general demanded, with the fine logic that had kept him out of trouble during his entire military career.

Andras sighed. "Perhaps I'd better let Romy explain it to you."

"Who is Romy?"

"This other student."

General Farago straightened in his seat. He made a command decision. "Show him in," he ordered.

Sigmund, upon entering, bowed low. "Excellency," he said.

"Well, well, well, speak up," said General Farago.

"Excellency, there is a problem," Sigmund said. Briefly, he outlined the problem, which summed up to the fact that he needed some wind players to augment his strings and the only place he could get them was from the military band.

General Farago, who found it somewhat difficult to concentrate on anything for any length of time, followed the threads of the story with a deep frown. When Sigmund finished, he snorted, "Take soldiers from the military band and give them to you to use in a schoolboy orchestra. I never heard of such nonsense."

"But, Your Excellency, the honor of Szeged is at stake," said Sigmund.

"Let the burgomaster worry about the honor of Szeged," said General Farago. He never liked the damned civilian anyway.

"The honor of the school is at stake," said Sigmund.

"That is for the dean to concern himself about."

Sigmund took a deep breath. "Excellency," he said softly, "*your* honor is at stake."

General Farago yanked at his sideburns. "How does it concern *my* honor, young man?"

"Excellency, as the commanding officer of Szeged, it will fall upon you to do the official honors for the Grand Duchess. If there is anything faulty with the music, it will be Your Excellency who will have to explain to Her Imperial Highness."

General Farago stood at attention. He bellowed for his aide. "Send the conductor of the military band to me immediately," he ordered.

The conductor of the military band was Top Sergeant Arpad Szilagyi, a choleric, rotund soldier with high blood pressure. He appeared almost instantly and stood at attention so rigid his jowls quivered.

"Sergeant," growled the general. "What do you know about a charity affair for Her Imperial Highness, the Duchess Clothilde?"

"Excellency," said Sergeant Szilagyi, "I am just now preparing a program for Her Imperial Highness. I am just now rehearsing the band, day and night. Excellency, Her Imperial Highness will have no occasion to find fault with the military band during her visit in Szeged."

"What?" asked the general. "Is the military band going to play too?"

"Too? Excellency, we are going to play the music at the ball to be given for Her Imperial Highness."

Hmm." General Farago tugged at his sideburns. "Well, Sergeant, you will have to give up some of your men."

"Give them up, Excellency?"

"Young man, explain to the sergeant what the problem is."

Sigmund explained to the sergeant. The sergeant grew increasingly red as the story unfolded. He started to sputter, when he remembered he was in the presence of the general. He saluted, in apology for the thought of sputtering. "Well, of course, if Your Excellency orders it, I think perhaps we might manage to spare one or two instruments."

"One or two will not be enough," Sigmund said.

"Oh, maybe three or four," said Sergeant Szilagyi.

"Not enough."

"Excellency . . ." Sergeant Szilagyi pleaded.

"This march is dedicated to Her Imperial Highness," said

Sigmund. "She has accepted the dedication. It may now be considered almost as an official piece of music."

"How many musicians do you need?" asked Sergeant Szilagyi.

"I will need at least twenty-two men," said Sigmund.

Sergeant Szilagyi began to gasp. He forgot the presence of the general and beat himself upon the forehead. "Twenty-two men! *Twenty-two men!*"

"And I want to select them myself," Sigmund continued. "I have listened to your band play again and again and I know exactly whom I want."

The face of Sergeant Szilagyi flooded with blood. Then he looked at his general. He grew limp. He held out his hands. "It will ruin my reputation as a conductor," he said. "But I am, after all, a soldier, and a soldier must obey orders."

"It is for Her Imperial Highness," General Farago thundered.

"Yes, Excellency," said Sergeant Szilagyi.

During the week Sigmund selected the soldiers he needed, and called for a rehearsal the following Saturday. The students gathered in the gymnasium, and, at the appointed hour, the soldiers appeared, marching in close formation.

On a chair in front of the twenty-two soldiers and eighteen students, Sigmund looked over his aggregation with satisfaction. He had reached something of a milestone in his life. It was the first piece of music he had ever composed to be played in public. It also was the first time he ever had orchestrated one of his own compositions for a regular orchestra. And, finally, it was the first time he ever controlled a unit of forty musicians.

He rehearsed the men and boys for several hours, going through the march time after time, pausing here and there to make corrections.

As the time approached for the great event, there were a number of tricky problems that arose. First of all there was the ques-

tion of costume. The soldiers in the band, of course, had only uniforms to wear. The students had no uniforms. The band could not appear for the concert half in military uniform and half in civilian dress. Since the students were forbidden by law to wear soldiers' uniforms, the only alternative was to have the soldiers appear in civilian dress.

An appeal was made to the students' parents. Several dozen men appeared at the school auditorium in response to the appeal. They carried clothing with them. From the assortment the soldiers managed to find dark clothing to fit. The problem was solved.

But there was still a major obstacle. In the custom of the time, most of the soldiers wore beards, or at least full-flowing mustaches, of which they were extremely proud. None of the schoolboys were so decorated. Since the effect to be achieved before the Grand Duchess was that she was being greeted by a school orchestra, something had to be done.

During one of the final rehearsals, Sigmund rapped for attention, and then announced that all the men with beards and mustaches would have to appear at the concert clean-shaven. The men rebelled.

They were summoned back to the gymnasium by General Farago himself. The general, in full-dress uniform, his chest covered with medals and honors, faced his men.

"Soldiers!" he cried in his parade voice. "Soldiers, you are called upon to do many things in the service of your country. Death and wounds are not the only dangers a soldier faces. It is not our place to ask the reason why. Soldiers, I know how this must grieve you, but no sacrifice is too great for the Emperor. It will be necessary for you to shave off your beards and mustaches. You must be as clean-shaven as the schoolboys for this one night." There was a stony silence. General Farago continued. "As soon as

the concert is over, the very moment it is over, I give you permission to start growing your beards and mustaches again!"

A sergeant barked an order. The men leaped to attention. The general walked past them, his eyes shining. As soon as he left the room the sergeant barked a second order. With resolute faces the men marched to the barber shop in the armory.

4.

The orchestra was at the railroad station on the day of the affair. The soldiers, uncomfortable in the loose-fitting civilian clothes, unhappy with their bare faces, feeling, in short, both naked and overdressed, were mixed in with the students. The train, no more than three hours late, chugged into the station. Madame Garay and General Farago boarded the train. A few moments later they reappeared with Her Imperial Highness, the Grand Duchess Clothilde, sister to Franz Josef, Emperor of Austria-Hungary.

There were several thousand persons milling around in the depot and they began to shriek a greeting. The Grand Duchess, weary from the dusty train ride, waved a hand. Her feet hurt.

Then Madame Garay announced, "A musical tribute from the citizens of Szeged to Her Imperial Highness."

The Grand Duchess, shifting painfully in her shoes, braced herself. Sigmund started the music of the great march.

"This music," whispered Madame Garay.

"What?" Her Imperial Highness shouted.

"Oh, we were so proud!"

"Proud?"

"That you should have accepted the march."

"Whatever are you talking about?" asked the Grand Duchess.

"This is the march written by a student in Szeged which Your Gracious Imperial Highness accepted."

Grand Duchess Clothilde, who heard little above the din of the band, and who wished the music would get over with so she could go somewhere and take off her shoes, shook her head.

"This is the march dedicated to you," shouted Madame Garay.

"Oh," said the Grand Duchess, remembering. "So that's how it sounds."

5.

The city took several weeks to get over the intoxication of the Imperial visit. Before very long, however, the students in the senior year at the school had something much more serious to think about. The time was approaching for the Matura.

Not all the students attempted to take the Matura. Those who did, according to custom, were excused from all other studies four weeks before the examination was scheduled to take place, and concentrated solely thereafter on the forthcoming test. During this period faculty members of the school were at the disposal of these students. Since there was no planned routine of study for the Matura, the student was supposed to be indicating, from that very beginning, qualities of discipline and judgment.

As the time approached, Sigmund surveyed his own situation. Nothing more had been said by Dean Kende, and he wondered how he was going to receive his reward for the great honor he had brought to the school and the city. Dean Kende, as has been pointed out, was, besides being the school head, the head of the physics department. Now Sigmund, upon taking stock, felt that he was quite competent, without help, to pass whatever tests he was given in Hungarian and German, and also had no fear of mathematics, for which he seemed to have the natural aptitude of the musician. The two subjects in which he was not sure of himself were physics and natural history.

One afternoon, a few days before the tests were to begin, he

encountered Dean Kende. The dean, who had lived in a roseate world ever since the evening when the Grand Duchess had received him in her box at the town hall, smiled at the young man and said, somewhat mysteriously, "I hope you know how to tune a violin." With this cryptic message, the dean walked on. Sigmund pondered the significance of the remark. He was certain it was a hint—but of what? He knew too that in that remark Dean Kende had paid his debt and from then on he was on his own.

He walked around all afternoon, trying to fathom the message. Then, suddenly, it dawned on him. Dean Kende, was, after all, the examining professor in physics and tuning a violin had to do with *sound*. That must be the answer. Forthwith he began to bone up on the science of sound; he filled his head with data about sound waves, about the construction of the human ear, about everything he could find in connection with sound.

He felt somewhat secure, then, about physics. But natural history remained, and in natural history his knowledge was woefully inadequate. He examined the textbook and decided he could not possibly learn everything necessary in the time left. Instead, he elected to perfect himself in one aspect of the subject, and chose, at random, the common housefly. He learned everything he could about it.

Examination day arrived. He had no trouble with the language examinations, and he made a passable grade in mathematics. When he was handed the physics examination, his heart leaped; it had, indeed, to do with sound. He passed the quiz handily. All that was left now was natural history, and if, by some miracle, he could get through that, he would have passed the Matura.

The natural history instructor was a grave-faced young man who greeted the students somberly. When he came to Sigmund, he requested that the young man tell him everything he knew, not

about the fly, but, instead, about the elephant. It appeared there could have been no greater contrast.

Sigmund sighed. He wondered just how far Dean Kende's protective cushioning went. He announced, "The elephant is one of the largest animals."

"How true," the instructor said gravely.

"There is no comparison between the size of the elephant and the size, say, of a fly."

"That is also true."

"Now take a fly," Sigmund said enthusiastically. "For its size it also is a mighty creature. With its two wings it is capable of passing through the air at a speed—"

"We are discussing an elephant, not a fly," the instructor interrupted.

"Of course. The elephant has a very thick skin and a long trunk."

"Agreed."

"But how annoying it must be to the elephant, with all his thickness of skin, if a little fly lights on him. One would not think that so small a creature as the fly could in any way affect so huge and naturally protected an animal as the elephant. But such is the case. Because nature so designed the fly. . ."

He spoke about the fly for ten minutes, ignoring interruptions, hoping that as long as he kept talking he might get through. The instructor finally ordered him to stop. He looked at Sigmund without expression, and then he said, "You may consider you have passed your examination in natural history. It may be said you have flown through it."

6.

For the thirty-six students in the Szeged Realschule who passed the Matura, the greatest reward was this: they were

allowed for the first time to smoke cigarettes in public. Future careers, future prospects in the army, were all very well; but to smoke in public was here and now and not the future. Whether they normally were addicted to the weed or not, whether they had smoked cigarettes surreptitiously earlier in their student days or not, now that they had passed the Matura, had crossed the line, each of the thirty-six youths paraded up and down the streets of the city smoking until he was blue in the face.

There were other immediate benefits. Now, for the first time, the students were permitted to go to any public restaurant or cafe. No longer was their wine-drinking, always technically forbidden, confined to one or two student cafes.

It was understood that these successful students had to celebrate. From time immemorial they were given the freedom of the town for three days—three days during which they could do no wrong. They were graduating students, which was enough to soften the hearts of the sentimental burghers, but they also were already touched with the magic of the officer corps.

Upon learning that he had passed all his examinations Sigmund naturally wired his father. Adam Romberg, in answer, expressed great happiness and pride, and, additionally, dispatched a sizable money order to pay for the three-day celebration. Since Adam Romberg had been a student himself once, the telegram contained the following instruction, "Be sure to buy your railroad ticket home before you start your fun."

Dutifully, Sigmund betook himself to the railroad station and bought a first-class ticket for Belisce. He carefully folded the ticket and put it in his pocket. Then he hunted up his friend Andras. "Well, where do we start?" he asked.

"Some of the gang are over at the Red Deer," Andras said.

"The Red Deer," Sigmund snorted. "We've been living in that place. We can go anywhere now. Anywhere."

"Malvina's at the Red Deer," Andras said slyly.

"Let's go to the Red Deer and have one glass of wine. But just one. I have looked into the matter. There are no less than sixty-seven first-class taverns in Szeged. Before I leave this place for good I want to have a glass of wine in each one of them."

At the Red Deer, their old student cafe, they found some of their friends seated at the old table. They joined the group, which was in the middle of a student song. It was a song in which they sat around the huge table, their arms entwined, sang a chorus, rose to their feet, their arms still entwined, sang a second chorus, climbed on the chairs, sang a third chorus, and finally stood on the table, still holding to each other, and sang the final chorus. Singing it, Sigmund was overcome with a sudden nostalgia. He realized that his student days in Szeged were ended, and the words got thick in his throat. His mind flew back through the years, Szeged, Pecs, Osiek, to the time eight years before when his mother and father had brought him to the strange city for the first time, when they had chanced to arrive on the night of an official tattoo. Somehow, no matter what had happened since, that tattoo, with its barbaric sights and sounds, had colored his entire life. It had been a keynote that set the tune for the years that followed. Music and color and tradition.

The song ended. The students climbed down from the table and banged on the tabletop. They shouted for wine. Presently the waitress appeared with a huge tray filled with winecups. As she passed him Sigmund threw his arms around her soft waist.

"Malvina, darling," he said.

"Let go or I'll spill this wine down your neck," she said.

"Don't you love me any more?" He held to her tightly.

"Let her go," his friends yelled. "Do you want us to die of thirst?"

Reluctantly he released her. She slipped away and deftly put a cup of wine before each student, collecting for it before she moved on to the next one. By the time she finished she had been

pinched, tugged, squeezed, and felt in all her soft places by every youth around the table.

When she returned to the service bar with her empty cups, Sigmund followed her. He pulled her face to him and kissed her. "The loveliest girl in Szeged," he assured her.

"So you've passed the Matura," she said. She was a light-haired girl with a pert, fresh face.

"Yes, my angel."

"And now I suppose you'll be leaving here and going off somewhere else."

"Yes, beloved, to Vienna."

She sniffed. "Vienna. And what has Vienna got that we haven't got?"

"Vienna has nothing that you haven't got."

"And you'll forget all about me," she pouted.

His arm made a huge sweep. "I will never forget you."

"That's what they all say."

"I shall always remember you," he said, and though he started to say it in a joke, he knew he meant it. He would always remember Malvina, because Malvina was the life he had just ended, Malvina was the years of school, the drinking and singing in student cafes, the cups of wine, the meetings in the night. Malvina was Szeged, just as she was Pecs and Osiek; she was a pretty waitress, but she also was his schooldays, his escapades, his carefree youth.

"What time do you finish tonight?" he asked.

"You should know," she said.

"Are you free?"

"Would I make another appointment with anyone else on the first night of the Matura celebration?"

"I'll meet you."

"At the usual place?"

"At the usual place."

She touched his cheek. She started to say something but the students were banging their cups again. She turned and hurried away.

He returned to the table, and his good spirits were gone. He wanted to relive the last year, with its music, its pleasures, its Malvina. He picked up his cup of wine and drank it. Andras slapped him on the back. "Drink," he said. "Drink, drink." Sigmund looked around the room, at the familiar smoke-grimed walls, the heavy beams in the ceiling, the huge seidels, the heraldic shields painted on the walls. Quickly he finished his wine. He shook off his depression and joined his friends in song.

They left the Red Deer and began to wander around the town. Somewhere they encountered a gypsy orchestra, and, after a conference with his friends, Sigmund hired the orchestra to remain with them for the next three days. The gypsy leader agreed on one condition: payment in advance. The money was collected and handed over, and from then on the musicians accompanied the students, playing as they went.

Suddenly, at two o'clock in the morning, Sigmund remembered his appointment. He slipped away from his friends and hurried toward the Red Deer. In a side street, not far from the cafe, he found her. "You're late," she greeted him.

"Not too late."

"You almost forgot, didn't you?"

"Malvina!"

"I know you students. You make your promises and then you drink a little wine and then nothing matters."

"I'm here," he reminded her.

"And soon you'll be gone. And what will you ever remember of the little waitress, Malvina?" They were hand-in-hand now, strolling through the dark, quiet street. "What will you ever

remember except that you banged your cups on the table and Malvina appeared with a tray and brought you more wine?"

"There is more than that to remember. The first night we were together. The time I brought the gypsy band to play under your window. The time I got into a fight with another student because he grabbed you and kissed you in the cafe."

"Will you remember those things?"

He nodded. They came to a small park. There was a sweet smell from growing things, opening in blossom to the new spring. They sat on a bench and he held her hand tightly.

"I shall miss you, Romy," she said.

"There will be other students."

"And why not?" she asked angrily. "You will be away. You will be in Vienna with another sweetheart." Her voice was filled with an experience that was older than either of them. "I know that men never remember a waitress and that after a little while you will completely forget the girl who used to bring you wine in the Red Deer and who used to meet you afterward. When you're in school you play a little game, with yourself and everyone else. It is like something on the stage. And then when it is over you go home and the lights are lowered and it's all over. You go back to where you belong and you do the things you have to do and if you ever think back it is only to smile a small smile and think how silly you were when you were a student."

She stood up suddenly. In the dimness of the night he could see tears under her eyes. "Come," she said. "It is getting late. The night is wearing off. Tomorrow night you will have started to forget and before you leave Szeged you won't remember very much at all."

It was toward the evening of the third night that Sigmund's money ran out. The hours that had passed had merged until day and night, morning and evening, were all something of a blur.

After he had left Malvina he had sought and found his friends again, and, together with the gypsy players, had continued wandering through the town. And now, on the third evening, in a cafe somewhere or other, he had reached into his pocket to pay for his wine and had found the pocket empty. He searched all his other pockets but there was no money, not so much as a kreutzer. And there were still hours left to celebrate.

He had a sudden idea and excused himself. He went to the railroad station and handed his first-class ticket to the agent. "I have changed my mind," he informed the official. "I wish to travel with the people. Change this to a second-class ticket."

The agent, who had had to make that change for a dozen students already, nodded glumly and made the alteration. He handed Sigmund the second-class accommodation and returned the difference in cash. His pockets again jingling with happy music, Sigmund returned to his friends. The spigot was pulled and the wine flowed again.

Just before midnight the new treasury dried up. Again he made his way to the station. The agent looked at him sourly. "I know, I know," he said in a weary voice. "Now you wish to travel with the peasants. All right, hand it over." He made out a third-class ticket and gave it to the youth, together with the change. "Remember," he warned. "There is nothing less than third class. After this, you walk."

It was six o'clock in the morning when the last kreutzer was spent. By then all the songs were sung, all the pledges of eternal friendship made. And now, as the daylight filtered through the streets, a group of the students stood in front of the cafe, blinking in the light.

Andras leaned against him. "I can't face a father who is a general in this condition," he said. "Let's go to a Turkish bath."

"Wonderful," Sigmund said. "But I'm broke."

Andras waved his hand grandly. "My father has an account

there. Come as my guest." He turned to the other students. "All of you, come as my guests to the Turkish bath."

The students were enthusiastic about the offer, but the gypsies, to whom a bath was almost a sin, demurred. Sigmund reminded them that they had been engaged to remain with them until the celebration was ended. There was a brief argument as to whether the celebration had ended with the last cup of wine, or could be considered as continuing at the bath. Since there were more students than gypsy players, the students won.

At the bath they started to sing again as they undressed. The gypsies got as far away from the water as they could, and continued to play. "Come on in," Sigmund said.

The gypsies shuddered. "That was not in the bargain," the leader pleaded.

The students, somewhat refreshed from their plunge in the water, advanced toward the gypsies. Hastily the gypsies began to disrobe. They managed to get their clothing off missing hardly a note. They stepped carefully into the shallow end of the pool and, with the water no higher than their knees, they went on playing. All but the player with the bass fiddle. He went no farther than the edge of the pool. He sat there, his feet dangling in the water, his big fiddle on his lap.

Suddenly, with a shout, Andras and Sigmund grabbed the bull fiddle and pulled it into the water. The player, holding tightly to it, was pulled in with it. He let go when his head went under the water and grabbed for the pool wall. He pulled himself out, shuddering with the unfamiliar feel of the water. Then he shrieked with pain to see Sigmund and Andras, using the fiddle for a float, paddling idly up and down the pool.

On the hard seat of a third-class compartment, Sigmund stared through the grimy train window, trying hard not to be sick from the smell of onion, garlic, and black tobacco that hovered around

him. The sounds of last farewells were still in his ears. So much had ended. Malvina had come down to the station to see him off, and in the morning light she had seemed strange, and had already gone away from him.

V

He stood on the crowded platform in the Sudbahnhof, a little confused, listening to the unfamiliar Viennese accent. He looked at the crack express trains from all parts of Europe, from as far away as Moscow and St. Petersburg. People bumped him in their hurry, apologized profusely, and rushed on. Then he heard someone call his name. He turned, startled, and then his face lit up and he broke into a smile. "Ernoe, Ernoe, what a surprise! How good it is to see you! I didn't know where to move in this excitement. How did you know I was coming, what train I was on?"

Ernoe Gutmann hugged his friend. "Your father wrote to my father, Romy, and they told me at home you were due in today. I've met two trains from the south already. Lord, it's good to see you again. Welcome to Vienna! How did you manage it? You must tell me all about it." Ernoe rushed on breathlessly and then suddenly the two youths laughed and threw their arms around each other. "What a time we'll have here, Romy. Vienna was just made for you, or maybe it's the other way around. Nobody speaks. Everybody sings. There is nothing but music twenty-four hours a day. All business is conducted in cafes. What more could one ask of a city?"

"Nothing, Ernoe," Sigmund said fervently. "Absolutely nothing."

"I knew you would want to know," Ernoe bubbled on, "so I found out." He pulled out a little notebook and opened it. "There are fourteen military bands and at least eighteen theatres with their own orchestras. I stopped counting at eighteen anyway, and I didn't even bother to count the *little* restaurants but they all make music and the *Salonkapelle* come out of your ears." He grinned. "What else do you want to know? I am full of information. I want you to be fully informed. I want to make a Viennese out of you! Our population? In the last census, let me see, we had 1,675,000 persons here. Many of them are female and quite beautiful. Like that one over there. The one staring at you."

Sigmund followed his nod. Then he rushed over to the girl. "Mariska, you did come! I was wondering whether you would when I wrote to you."

"Welcome to Vienna, Sigmund," she said.

"Let me look at you. How long has it been? More than a year. You are lovelier than ever. How kind it was of you to come here to meet me. When I stepped from the train it seemed I entered a kind of bedlam—a bedlam filled with strangers. And then Ernoe showed up and now you." He took the girl by the arm. "Come, you know Ernoe. Oh, Mariska, I'm so glad to see you!"

"You might kiss me."

"Did I forget that? My God, I must be out of my mind!"

"It is quite permissible in a railroad station."

He kissed her and held her for a moment. Then he looked at her closely. The peasant girl from the little shanty on the railroad track had completely disappeared. Mariska Antal, after her years in the capital, had become quite cosmopolitan. She was dressed in the latest fashion; there also was something theatrical about her, about her dress and makeup. There was also something

a little less attractive: a hardness in her face, and her eyes were tired and she seemed older than her twenty-one years.

And she studied him. She saw a slender, eager-faced youth of something above middle height. He was dressed quietly in an Oxford-gray suit and he wore a bowler. She compared him, for a moment in passing, with some of the men she had known in the theatre, with their flashy clothing and jewelry. He had an open face with none of the almost artificial handsomeness of the actors with whom she associated. She suddenly clutched his hand and squeezed it. "It's very good to see you, Sigmund. I look at you and listen to you speak and it seems that the years drop away. How is Belisce? How is our river? We have a river here in Vienna too and it is quite a celebrated river but I think a river to me always will be the Drau. Remember where we had our picnic that day?"

"You sound almost as though you are not happy in Vienna," Sigmund said in some surprise. "Hasn't Vienna been good to you? You are on the road to success."

She smiled and he again was conscious of her hardness and weariness. "Here is your friend."

She had, in a moment, lost the openness that was with her when she had spoken of Belisce and the Drau. Now her eyes sparkled with animation and there was a bright expectant smile on her face. Sigmund felt that for a few moments he had held something of her and that now it had escaped. "But surely you know Baron Ernoe Gutmann," he said. "You have met before. Ernoe, this is Mariska Antal. Your mother and father sponsored her in Vienna. Why we used to listen to her sing in Belisce at the New Year's parties."

Ernoe and the girl looked at each other with peculiar expressions and then Ernoe said hurriedly: "But, of course. I didn't recognize you for a moment. I must be losing my vision. How are you, Mariska? It is a long time since we've seen you at our home."

"Ernoe, of course. I've been so busy lately. Working in the theatre doesn't leave time for much of a social life."

Sigmund had the feeling that in exchanging these politenesses they were trying to keep something from him. Then Ernoe, tactfully, said: "Well, what shall we do? It is not often that a couple of old Viennese characters like us can welcome a friend from the country. First of all we must dispose of your luggage and then we shall go out and celebrate. It's a lovely day and perhaps we can take a ride in the Prater."

"Are you free, Mariska?" Sigmund asked.

"Certainly. When I received your letter telling me you were arriving today I made no other plans."

"Good," Ernoe said heartily. "Now, first with the details. Where are you going to live in Vienna, Romy?"

"My father made arrangements with a friend, a cotton broker, or Rotenthurmstrasse, near Stefanskirche."

"Give me the address and give me the receipts for your luggage. I'll have it all sent to the place and then we shall be free to taste some of the Viennese air."

Sigmund wrote the address on a card and gave it to his friend, together with his baggage stubs.

"There is a little cafe at the other end of the station," Ernoe went on. "Why don't you two go there and have a cup of coffee and as soon as I take care of these details I'll join you."

Sigmund and Mariska started to stroll to the restaurant. He felt she wanted to tell him something and he felt also that he should not question her until she spoke of her own free will. He put his arm under hers. "Vienna, Vienna. It's a magic name. For years now I've been dreaming of these moments. To step off the train and find you waiting for me." They passed a little flower stall. He bought a bunch of white violets.

"It's a long time since I've had white violets," she said. She smelled the flowers and pressed them to her breast.

"The first flowers in Vienna should have been orchids. Orchids to wear and champagne to drink!"

"No. White violets. They are perfect. And no champagne. Some wine later, but just some coffee now." She looked at him seriously. "I'm very glad to see you, Sigmund. I notice that Ernoe calls you Romy. I prefer Sigmund."

They entered the coffee house and sat at a small table. He asked her what she wanted.

"Just coffee. A *kapuziner*."

"With just plain cream? How about a *mélange?*"

"No. No whipped cream. I have to keep my figure."

"I'll take black coffee," he said. He ordered a *kapuziner* for the girl and a *schwarze* for himself. They sipped the drinks. Finally, stirring her coffee, she said, "I have not seen the Gutmanns for a long time, Sigmund."

He said nothing.

"Oh, they were very good to me," she went on. "I shall always be grateful to them. But there were things they did not approve of." Her eyes flashed. "No wrong things, you understand, but it is hard for families like that to understand the customs . . . the customs, yes, the customs of the stage. The theatre is a very unconventional place and there are many things about it that shock people like the Gutmanns."

He nodded and sipped his coffee.

"I've done nothing to be ashamed of. You may hear differently but it is the truth. I am ashamed of nothing. Only it is impossible for a girl in the theatre in Vienna to live as though she were in a convent." Her face was defiant.

He reached out and touched her fingers. "I understand, Mariska. And, in any case, it's no longer important. Now that I am here everything will be different." She looked up. "Here is Ernoe."

"Drinking coffee like good little children," Ernoe said, sitting

down. "Well. Everything is taken care of, Romy. When you get to your diggings tonight you'll find everything there. I told the porter to inform the people at the house that you were going to spend some time with old friends and that you wouldn't be home until late."

"Wonderful, what shall we do first?" Sigmund asked.

"Well, there is only one thing for a person to do when he comes to Vienna for the first time," Ernoe said. "We shall hire a fiacre and ride around the Ringstrasse. Then we'll go out to the Prater. By that time it will be time for a good dinner and some music. How does that sound?"

"Marvelous. How does it sound to you, Mariska?"

"I have to be at the theatre at eight," she said. "Until that time anything we do together will be wonderful."

"Good," Ernoe said. "Then we are all agreed. Come, Romy, and meet Vienna!"

They left the coffee house and Ernoe summoned a horsedrawn fiacre, one of the legion of which Vienna was so inordinately proud.

Ernoe ordered the driver to go around the Ringstrasse. The horses trotted smartly up the Heugasse and entered the ring at the Kartnerring and then turned left. "I've boned up specially for this occasion," Ernoe announced. "For instance, I can tell you about these buildings we are passing. There is a structure you will want to know about. That is the Imperial Opera House. Gustav Mahler is conducting there now and a chap named Bruno Walter has just become his assistant. They say this Walter has a great deal of promise."

Sigmund looked at the magnificent Renaissance building. "I must go there as soon as possible," he said.

"Whenever you like," Ernoe said indifferently.

The cab clattered along the street which surrounded the old inner city of Vienna and which was built on the site of the

ancient ramparts erected to defend the original city from the Turks. In the loud voice of a professional guide, Enroe called out one building after another, the museums, the university, the town hall; finally the cab entered the Franz Josef Quai along the Danube Canal, crossed the canal on the Aspern Bridge and entered onto the Praterstrasse. Presently, at the Pratersterne, they entered the Prater itself.

The chestnut trees along the noble Haupt Allee were still in leaf in the warm fall weather and now the sun was setting and the golden colors sprawled everywhere and Sigmund stared speechless at the beautiful park, and, holding tightly to Mariska's hand, only half-hearing the running commentary by Ernoe, he had to assure himself that he truly was in Vienna, in the Prater, and that Mariska was at his side. It seemed to him that moment that he had lived through this experience before. He had the sensation of repeating himself, of repeating each detail, of listening, hearing the clattering hoofs of the horses, the creaking of the carriage, the spinning of the wheels, listening and not entirely hearing the voice of his friend, feeling the warm hand of the girl, smelling the perfume she used, feeling her body pressed against him in the carriage seat.

Vienna was as much in the mind as in the eyes, and that moment would come again and again to him through his life, and would, in its own way, symbolize a portion of the beautiful city, and, more, a portion of his youth. When it was over and ended, as it so soon was to be, when none of this ever could be repeated, truly repeated apart from his memory, he would think of that afternoon, in the warm air, think of the other carriages, the fading sunlight on the trees, the four rows of the trees themselves, and then, as though coming from somewhere within himself, as though it were his own personal contribution, the first sounds of the music. He stiffened in his seat, his fingers tightening on the girl's, and as they approached the music and it grew louder he

could see the lights of a restaurant, twinkling like low stars among the trees. The song was a waltz, of course, and he lifted Mariska's hand and pressed it to his lips. He felt that everything that was dear to him in his life was contained in that instant.

"This is the Third Kaffeehaus. It's a good place to eat," Ernoe said. "Shall we stop there?"

Sigmund nodded. "Are there two other cafes of the same name?"

"Well, the First Kaffeehaus is the place where the common soldiers hang out. The Second Kaffeehaus is frequented by the noncommissioned officers."

"And the Third Kaffeehaus?"

"That is reserved for visitors to Vienna," Ernoe laughed. "No, seriously, it is the finest of the three. You will enjoy it."

They entered the restaurant. The door led into a large open garden. The enclosed restaurant was behind the garden. As they entered the room the first thing Sigmund saw was the orchestra in the bandstand.

"The orchestra is the military band from the Hoch und Deutschmeister Infantry Regiment Number 4," Ernoe whispered. "That is Vienna's home regiment and that's supposed to be one of the greatest bands in the entire army. But you'd know more about that end of it than I do."

With the assurance of one who had been there often before, Ernoe spoke to the headwaiter, who recognized him, and the friends were escorted to a table where Sigmund could watch as well as listen to the band. There was no dancing in the restaurant. The people listened to the music as though they were in a concert hall.

Sigmund scarcely remembered the meal. For him Ernoe ordered *garniertes rindfleisch*, a sort of boiled beef with vegetables, and in tribute to the Hungary from which he had just arrived, ordered *gulyas* for Mariska and himself. For dessert there was

the specialty of the house, a Viennese *strudel.* They drank an excellent champagne, and although everything was better than anything Sigmund had ever eaten or drunk before, he was filled with so much excitement from the music and surroundings that he could not have told afterward what he had put into his mouth.

He could have remained there for hours, but Mariska said it was getting time for her to return to the theatre. Ernoe waved his hand. "Watch the Oberkellner," he whispered to Sigmund. "You have something to see."

In response to Ernoe's signal, a tall man in evening dress appeared at the table. Ernoe informed him what had been eaten and drunk and in a flash, almost before Ernoe had finished speaking, the man gave the total sum. Ernoe handed him a bill of large denomination. The man folded it into a billfold he extracted from an inner breast pocket. Then he swept back his jacket with his two hands, and Sigmund saw that he wore a broad leather belt. On the back of the belt were two large pouches. With incredible speed, and with no change of expression on his face, the man thrust his hands into the two pouches simultaneously. Then he flung the change on the table, kroner and gulden coming from one hand, smaller coins from the other. It was done so quickly Sigmund caught his breath. He counted the change. It was exactly right.

Ernoe laughed. "Pretty good, hey? The story is that if he ever makes a mistake you can keep the difference, but I never heard of anyone collecting."

The Oberkellner, his amazing performance over, walked away. Sigmund was popeyed. "But he never counted the change," he said.

"He is an artist," Ernoe said.

They rode back to the city and deposited Mariska at the theatre. Ernoe went to the boxoffice and bought two seats, but because of the lateness of the hour was unable to get very good

ones. The show was a light musical comedy and in one scene in the second act Mariska had a small singing solo.

They picked up the girl after the performance and went to Sacher's for a snack. "Well, how did you like my performance?" she asked.

"Not bad," he said.

"But not good?"

"I think you could be coached a little," he said. Then he took her hand. "Don't be offended. It's just that I want you to do everything better than anyone else."

She raised her eyebrows. "The critics thought I was all right," she pouted.

"The critics don't know everything."

It was not until three o'clock in the morning that they brought the girl to her dwelling. She lived in a small rooming house on a dark, narrow side street. Ernoe remained in the fiacre as Sigmund walked her to the door.

"I probably shall be unable to see you tomorrow," he said. "There are things I have to do."

"We've had such a full day I've forgotten completely that you didn't tell me what you plan to do in Vienna," she laughed.

"I'm going to attend school here, at the Polytechnical Institute. It seems there is no end to school. My father still insists that I become an engineer. We had quite a row at home when I returned from Szeged. Then we compromised. I agreed to continue studying and he agreed to allow me to take music lessons. I'm going to study harmony and counterpoint here with Victor Heuberger."

"You will be quite a busy young man," she said, touching his cheek.

"Not that busy."

She leaned over and kissed him. "Good night, Sigmund. Or, rather, good morning. This city feels more homelike to me now that you are here." She pushed the bell and in a few minutes

he house porter opened the door, rubbing his eyes with sleep.

"Eh, it's you, Miss Antal," he said grumpily. Sigmund handed him ten kreutzer which he pocketed without a word. He turned and walked back in the direction he had come from.

"Pleasant man," Sigmund commented.

"He likes his sleep." She slipped into the house and closed the door. He walked back to the fiacre. Ernoe was sprawled out comfortably in the seat puffing on a cigar. Sigmund climbed in. "Well, Romy, what next?" Ernoe asked.

"Bed, I think. Is anything going on at this hour?"

"I know an excellent establishment where you might double your money, if you're lucky."

"Gambling?"

"Well, some call it that. I regard it as a kind of charitable organization which I have been supporting for some time now."

"I think I'm ready for some sleep. I've got too much to do tomorrow."

"Probably best." He gave the driver his friend's address and then they relaxed in the seat. "We've not seen Mariska in a long time, Romy," he said.

Again Sigmund had the feeling that something was being held back. "So she said."

Ernoe rolled his cigar between his lips. "I almost did not recognize her." He looked keenly at his friend. "Remember," he said. "Remember one thing. In Vienna nothing is taken seriously. Not even broken hearts. There are so many women it would be stupid."

"What are you trying to tell me, Ernoe?"

"Nothing. Just remember Vienna is not the provinces. You will have to make adjustments. Vienna has its own standards and its own way of life and sooner or later everyone conforms. Nothing hurts anyone here. That is Vienna." He slapped his friend

on the thigh. "Don't be in love with a woman, be in love with love. You'll be happier."

2.

For the next few weeks the Viennese mood was one of confusion. Upon registering at the Politechnische Hochschule, he learned to his astonishment that it was not required for the students to attend lectures. It was the responsibility of the student to pass the examinations and if he chose to absent himself from classes he injured no one but himself. After the rather strict discipline in the other schools he had attended, this academic freedom was somewhat heady. He promised himself that he would not take too great an advantage of it.

The main home of the Gutmanns was in Vienna and Sigmund became a steady caller there. Baron and Baroness Gutmann held open house every Sunday afternoon, and with these gatherings as springboards Sigmund found himself plunged into an active social existence. In addition to the Sunday parties the Gutmanns entertained frequently during the week and Sigmund was invited automatically.

His time was filled. He attended his classes faithfully, he studied composition and harmony with Heuberger, one of the greatest of living teachers, he spent time with Mariska, he appeared at the Gutmanns', and he had a separate social life with Ernoe, with whom he organized a quartette which rapidly won popularity among their friends.

As Ernoe had remarked, he didn't know whether he was made for Vienna or Vienna for him, but he was happier now than he had ever been before. Vienna fit him; he brought to the city a love of music and a talent for it which alone would have ensured his welcome. But he also brought a love of laughter, a light-

ness and gaiety which, Enroe very soon observed, was quite definitely in the Viennese mood.

3.

Sigmund closed the front door to his quarters and stepped into the street. He had an appointment to meet Ernoe in a little coffee house and he had arranged to leave early so that he would have time to walk. He never tired of walking through the streets of Vienna, finding new ways whenever he could. It seemed to him that he could not get enough of the city. He wanted to see everything, to listen to everything, to absorb the city through his nose, smelling the air that was Viennese. He walked slowly, listening to the chatter of people, nodding at a little flower girl, waving a hand at a policeman he knew, pausing to look into the open doorway of a cheese shop. The owner had become a friend of his, and called out, now, that he had a new shipment of a magnificent Italian cheese. Sigmund told him to put some aside and walked on. When he arrived at the rendezvous he saw Ernoe was already seated. With him was a young man he had never met before.

Ernoe greeted him warmly and then introduced him to the stranger. "This is Laczi, a friend of mine," he said. "I found him wandering alone on the street. I asked him to join us for a cup of coffee and, being another student and always hungry, he agreed immediately."

Laczi, a thin-faced, dark young man with deep intense eyes, laughed. "The last time we met you were happy for me to stake you to a meal, I remember."

Ernoe nodded sadly. "Yes, that was an unfortunate night. The cards were all the other way. It's a good thing my father gambles in the same places I do. It's so easy to put my debts on his account and he loses so much that he never knows it." He ordered

a black coffee for Sigmund. "Anyway, you ought to know this creature, because his father, Herr Karczag, is the owner of the Theater an der Wien."

Sigmund's interest picked up. The Theater an der Wien was one of the most famous showplaces in Vienna, and on its boards were performed some of the finest operettas in the city.

"Laczi wants to know if we would like to go backstage at his father's place," Ernoe said. "Romy, what do you say? There's a musical on and the girls are quite pretty. My father says I ought to go out with showgirls more often. He says it would be cheaper than playing roulette."

Sigmund agreed instantly, and after finishing their coffee, the three friends went to the theatre. They waited in the wings until Laczi flagged his father, who was running around barking orders at the stagehands. Karczag, a short, dark man, greeted his son briefly, shook hands warmly with Ernoe and inquired after his father, the baron, and nodded curtly to Sigmund. Then he excused himself and vanished.

The three youths found a quiet corner and watched the pre-curtain excitement. Sigmund felt like a hunting dog on the scent. His head turned in all directions. His nostrils sniffed at the theatrical smells. He felt suddenly at home; this was his proper milieu. This was where he belonged. The smell of the grease-paint, the sharp tang of the cement used to attach the false beards and mustaches, the perfume and powder of the girls intoxicated him. The sounds: the orchestra tuning up in front, the brisk talk of the stagehands, the chatter of the girls, the singers exercising their voices. And the building intensity as curtain time approached. These things stirred his blood with a fever. When they left later and entered the dark street again, he felt as though he had come from another world entirely.

"Do you suppose your father would mind if I came back again?" he asked Laczi.

"No. He's really a pretty good fellow," the young man said. "He makes a lot of noise and frightens people, but he doesn't mean it."

"When you see him again," Sigmund urged, "repeat my name to him so he will know me when I come around."

"I'll just tell him you're related to Baron Gutmann. That will get you entry any time," Laczi said.

School, which already was suffering under the press of outside activities, suffered more. It was impossible to remain home and look into books when the world of the theatre was opened to him. He appeared backstage at Karczag's showplace more and more frequently, and soon became a familiar face there. He lent himself readily to the atmosphere, and Karczag, who was, as his son explained, a soft-hearted individual, soon came to look for him around the theatre. The professional actors and actresses accepted him as well. From the start they felt that the young, slender youth who quipped light-heartedly with them, who would listen to their troubles, who could be called upon to adjust a costume, who would give an opinion on makeup, was one of them. There was no awkwardness about him as he moved from one place to another; he kept out of people's way and never offered an opinion unless he was asked. When, one day, it was announced he would serve as *corepetitor,* no one was surprised. Only Karczag knew that he had begged for the job and had taken it without remuneration.

When, a few weeks later, a new musical play was put into rehearsal and a young blonde girl named Mariska Antal was presented as a friend of Romberg, there was no surprise. When Miss Antal was given a small part in the new show, there was complete understanding.

On opening night he entered her dressing room. As a minor principal Mariska had to share the room with only four other girls. The girls squealed as he walked in on them in their various stages of undress. Laughing, he patted one, pinched another, winked at a third. Then he came to Mariska's dressing table and he bent down and kissed her on the neck. She pulled away from him and made a moue, to indicate she didn't approve of his easy way with the other girls. Then she applied more rouge to her cheeks.

"Not too much," he said. "You're not in the chorus here. You will be alone, under a spot."

She whirled, ready to flare, and then subsided. Since she had been rehearsing for the new show she had developed a healthy respect for his suggestions. He had a natural feel for everything to do with the theatre, and this quality was recognized even by the hardboiled Karczag. Once Mariska, on stage, had seen Karczag turn to Sigmund, both of them sitting in the front row of the audience, and ask, "Romy, what the hell is wrong up there? It's something and I can't put my finger on it."

Sigmund suggested a change of lighting and it seemed that the scene worked out better. Not always, but often, he was able to put his finger on it. It usually was a little thing, the misreading of a punch-line, a gesture that needed to be added or omitted, an intonation, a detail of costume. He was encouraged by Karczag to make suggestions, and Mariska, watching all this, began to understand that she could help herself by listening to him.

Now, in the dressing room, he looked at her judiciously, turning her face from side to side. The other girls watched with a frank envy and Mariska purred like a cat. "Remember now," he said, shading down the cheek rouge, "when you step forward to sing your solo do not look at the audience."

"Not look at the audience," she protested. "I'm singing to the audience. I want them to hear me."

"They will hear you, all right. And you are not singing to the audience. You are singing to the tenor. Don't walk forward as though you were alone on the stage. Remember that you are part of a play, and that for you and the other actors on the stage the audience really doesn't exist at all. You are living in a world of your own, and each detail in it is real and true to you. If you can feel that your singing will reflect it and will have sincerity. Remember that."

"If I have to sing to that sissy I'll have to remain upstage. That's where he is then."

"That doesn't matter. If the tenor is upstage, remain there. Just sing to him. Sing as though you were speaking to him, as though you were telling him what the song was." He stepped back and surveyed his work. "And remember, end it on a low note, an octave below where it is written."

"But that high note at the end gives me a chance to show off my voice," she said petulantly. They had been all through this before.

"I know but it kills the mood of the song."

She sighed and nodded and then looked at the other girls with an expression of helplessness. The girls looked duly sympathetic and wished in their hearts a young man, especially one as talented as Mariska's young man, would come in just before curtain time and give them private coaching.

"I have to go now. I'll see you later. We're going to the Cafe Graben after the theatre. Ernoe and his girl will be there with us." He kissed her and walked out. A boy was standing in the corridor with a bouquet of flowers. He inspected the flowers, saw that his card was on them, and sent the boy into the dressing room. Then he went backstage. He had been calm, severe almost, in talking to Mariska but he was tingling inside. He felt he had had not a little to do with this new show. He had worked with Karczag and he had worked with Mariska. He had found that he had some

very definite ideas about the show, and he had tried to mold Mariska as much as her part permitted. He had experienced a thrilling sense of power during the rehearsals, and also something of a feeling of disappointment as far as Mariska was concerned. She had her beautiful voice, all right, but with his developing sense of the theatre he realized that apart from this natural gift her talents were severely limited. And she was stubborn.

The call boy went from room to room and gave the ten-minute signal. Sigmund stood in the wings and surveyed the stage. He waved to Karczag, who was in earnest conversation with a young man. Karczag motioned for him to come over. "Romy, here's a friend of mine I want you to meet. Franz, this is Sigmund Romberg. Romy, Franz Lehar."

"This is a great honor," Sigmund said.

Lehar, a pleasant-faced youth in his late twenties, with light curly hair and a frank open smile, said, "Thank you. I wish Karczag here thought so."

Karczag shook his head. "Franz, you know I love to talk to you any time. Only don't waste my time talking about that latest thing you wrote. You know I don't want to get in trouble with the authorities."

"I think the censor won't hold it up forever." Lehar sighed. "I'm very glad to have met you, Romberg. I have to join some friends in the audience. Perhaps we can have a glass of wine together sometime."

"Some of us are going to get together after the show at the Cafe Graben. You know Ernoe Gutmann. Could you join us there?"

"Delighted." He nodded pleasantly and left.

"What a great deal of talent," Karczag grumbled.

"What's the matter with his new show?"

"It's no good. Oldfashioned. Of course I couldn't tell him that. Besides, he's in trouble with the court censor. Better let him tell you about that."

"What's the name of it?"

Karczag scratched his head. "Some silly name. 'The Laughing Widow' or 'The Merry Widow.' Something like that."

4.

Karczag's new production was a revival of the *'Bettelstudent.'* It was pleasant and well received. The production was a personal failure, however, in the inability or refusal of Mariska to follow his instructions. It was as though he had never said a word to her. She postured and posed and overacted, and during her one solo she marched down to the front of the stage, and with her back to the men to whom she was singing, she gave forth with her aria.

Mariska took several encores. Sigmund went backstage and met her as she stepped off. He shook her angrily. "I told you to face the tenor when you sang and to stay upstage," he blazed. "What good is it to waste hours coaching you when you forget everything I told you the minute you see paying customers in the audience?"

She pulled away from him. "Listen to them, Sigmund," she laughed. "They're still applauding. Tell me, who was right and who was wrong?" There was no doubt, they were still applauding. She kissed him gaily on the cheek. "I have had some stage experience, you know. I'm not entirely an amateur." She rushed on to the dressing room, leaving him speechless.

As they rode to the Graben after the show was over she attempted to brighten him. "Oh, it was so wonderful, Sigmund. And I haven't forgotten that it was you who got me the part. But I think I was right. Remember, darling, this is your first experience in the theatre and I'm something of an old hand. Heavens, did you hear them applaud? I thought I would faint. I never had to take so many encores in my life. I think I could

have sung that song over again if Karczag, the old bully, would have let me. Darling, please talk to Karczag. He has such a respect for you. Make him let me sing the song again if the audience wants me to."

"All right, Mariska," he agreed.

At the Graben they found that Ernoe and Lehar had discovered each other and were already seated. The two men rose as they approached and Ernoe kissed Mariska's hand with a great gesture. "A star is born," he said.

Mariska giggled. "I wish you would convince this grumpy boy of that. You see, Sigmund, not everyone thought I did so bad."

"Bad? I thought your song was magnificent," Ernoe said.

"Well, tell it to Sigmund. He thinks I ruined the show."

"Not quite," Sigmund said. They sat down and Ernoe filled their glasses with champagne.

"He tells me that I should have stayed upstage and sung the song to the tenor. He says it would have improved the play. I say if a singer has a solo, well, sing it and make the best of it. It's all part of the play and you heard what the audience did."

Lehar looked at Sigmund curiously. "You know, you're quite right, Romberg."

"Now you're agreeing with him, Herr Lehar." She frowned for a moment. "The audience thought I was splendid," she said.

"And you were," Lehar said instantly. Then he added. "But you were right, Romberg."

"Let's drink some champagne," Ernoe said. The girl with him looked at him adoringly. He filled the glasses. "Here's to the *'Bettelstudent'* and here's to Mariska!"

The restaurant was filling rapidly and many of the diners had come from the theatre. On or two of them recognized Mariska, and leaned down to compliment her, to her intense pleasure. Sigmund, watching her react, thought that he had been working with inferior clay, and then he told himself he was being ungenerous,

that she would naturally feel as she did. He threw off his annoyance and tried to approach her mood. Ernoe had ordered the meal in advance, and presently the waiter brought the *assietten*, or hors d'oeuvres, followed by a surprise, *Kaiser-fleisch*, smoked suckling pig.

The orchestra began to play some of the music from the play and when the leader discovered that Mariska Antal was in the place he asked her if she would join the orchestra in singing her song. She rose with marked pleasure, and sang the song well, and when she returned to her friends her cup was surely filled to overflowing. Over the coffee and brandy, Sigmund remembered the conversation with Karczag about Lehar's new play, and he asked the composer about it.

Lehar shifted the brandy around in the large glass, and shook his head. "It's not a very interesting story," he said. "A few years ago I wrote this musical play. I based it on the life of Prince Danillo. Rather, I should say, in many respects it resembles some of the incidents in Danillo's life."

"Who is Prince Danillo?" Ernoe's girl friend asked.

"He is the Crown Prince of Montenegro. It's just a musical play. However, it seems to have got itself mixed up with official Imperial policy—the court thinks it might be offensive to the Montenegran government—and the censor has held it up for two years. Perhaps it doesn't matter. Karczag says he doesn't think it would be a big success and he's pretty shrewd." He lifted the brandy glass and smelled the perfume and then sipped some of the golden liquid. "It probably doesn't matter at all. It looks as though it will get lost in the censor's files until the end of time. And Karczag says that's just as well, that I ought to forget it and start something new."

"He said the name of it was 'The Merry Widow,' " Sigmund said. "Is that right?"

"That's what I call it. Karczag says even the title is bad." He

finished off his brandy. "Well, the devil with it. I'll just consider it time lost and start on something new."

5.

Sigmund appeared at one of the musicals in the Gutmann home and was chided by the baroness, who regarded him almost as a son, for not coming to visit them more often. "You have become such a young man about Vienna that we barely see you these days," she said. "How is your work going at the school?"

"School? All right, I guess," he said. He had not thought about school for days.

"Your mother wrote to me and asked me to keep an eye on you," the baroness said with a twinkle in her eyes.

"And here I am," he said.

The baroness looked up as a tall distinguished man with a mane of white hair entered the room. "There is Albert Gruenfeld," she said. When Sigmund sought to excuse himself she said, "No, you remain with me. I want you to meet him."

The great pianist walked to his hostess. He kissed her hand. "It is always such a pleasure to come to your home, Baroness," he said.

"It is an honor to have you," the baroness replied. "Alfred, this is Sigmund Romberg. He is the son of Adam Romberg."

Gruenfeld smiled warmly as he shook Sigmund's hand. "I have been looking forward to meeting you," he said. "Your father wrote to me and told me you were in Vienna. He said he gave you a letter to me. Why haven't you called on me?"

Sigmund blushed. It was hard to explain, particularly to Gruenfeld himself. Gruenfeld was regarded as one of the greatest artists of his time and was a great celebrity in Vienna. Sigmund, although he had the letter of introduction and he knew that the

pianist was a cousin of his father, couldn't bring himself around to presenting himself.

Gruenfeld watched him keenly, and then he put his arm around the young man's shoulder in a friendly way. "You are probably so busy in Vienna that you have had no time to see an old man."

Sigmund shook his head. "No, sir. That's not the reason at all. It's just that I always thought you would be so occupied . . . you're such an artist . . ." He stammered and turned still redder.

"Well, we'll put an end to that," Gruenfeld said. "You may know that I always have friends in on Sundays between eleven and one. It would please me to see you there one of these Sundays. My house is on Gauermanstrasse, Number 3."

"This Sunday, Mr. Gruenfeld, if I may," Sigmund said.

"I shall look for you then," the artist said.

Sigmund appeared at Gruenfeld's home the following Sunday. There were a dozen or more persons already there, and Gruenfeld was seated at the piano. He waved his hand as Sigmund entered and called out his name casually to the other guests. Sigmund found a chair and sat down.

It was Gruenfeld's custom to ramble along on the piano during these gatherings, usually practicing the music he intended to play at his next concert. He played easily and gracefully and made no demands upon his guests. He stopped no one from talking and asked no one to listen to him.

Sigmund listened enraptured. He couldn't understand how anyone could talk when Gruenfeld was playing. He wanted to tell everyone to keep quiet. Suddenly someone began to tell a long musical anecdote, ignoring the music Gruenfeld was playing. Sigmund thought that the pianist surely would become angry. Instead, Gruenfeld left off what he had been playing and

started a merry accompaniment to the story, which dealt with Liszt and Chopin. As the narrator unfolded the tale, Gruenfeld followed him, playing appropriate music of each of the composers in the story. When the story was ended there was a great deal of applause, and most of it was for the pianist.

The story seemed to start a trend. Someone remembered an amusing story in connection with Brahms and the composer Bruch. When this story was ended Gruenfeld, with his charming smile, said that he too had a story to tell.

"You will pardon me, my friends, if the story also concerns me," he said in his melodious voice. "It takes place in 1880 and deals with the great Johann Strauss. Incidentally, Strauss' widow, Adele, is a lonely person and welcomes visits from friends who love her husband's music. I recommend that when any of you can spare an hour or two you drop in and say hello to her and tell her what you think of the Strauss music. It is the breath of life to her to listen to such talk.

"In any case, as you may or may not know, Johann was a member of the Wiener Maennergesangs Verein, the same Viennese male chorus society that exists today with Victor Heuberger as its conductor. Our young friend Sigmund Romberg is presently studying with Heuberger. Well, the society has its annual outings, as you know, and one time Johann Strauss composed a song which poked fun at the organization, and at some of the more amusing characteristics of some of its members. The song, shall we say, was more than a little risque, and it was sung only at these stag outings held by the members.

"This song was sung for two or three of these annual affairs, and each year new verses were added, and they seemed to grow a little more risque all the time. One day I decided to have a little fun with Johann. I was scheduled to give a performance at the Conzertvereinhalle in the near future and I made a concert arrangement of this melody Johann had written for the society. It

was quite a good audience that night. It seems on that particular occasion every well-known person in our artistic world appeared —and a number of these persons, of course, were members of the choral society and even among those persons who did not belong to the society there were many who knew about Johann's ballad.

"The concert was successful, and at the end I announced that I was going to play a new waltz by Johann Strauss, as an encore. You can well imagine the excitement this announcement made. A new waltz by Strauss was an event of the greatest importance and no one had known anything about this one, of course. Strauss himself was in the audience and I believe he was the most puzzled of them all. He did not know what to say to those persons sitting next to him who asked him why he had kept such important news a secret.

"When the reaction quieted down, I added, in a casual way, that the waltz originally had been composed for the Wiener Maennergesangs Verein. At this there was quite a different reaction. Almost everyone knew, or found out immediately, what the song was. I said I had written a paraphrase, and sat down and played it."

Gruenfeld paused and smiled. He looked from face to face. Sigmund felt he was in a dream world, listening to these stories about the immortals.

"When I finished," Gruenfeld continued, "there was a tremendous ovation. I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that the house came down. Strauss leaped out of his seat and ran up to the stage and threw his arms around me and said so that everyone could hear him, 'Alfred, I know I wrote it, but I never really knew what I had written until I heard it played by you!' There was so much shouting and clamoring I had to sit down and play the song again, and I could see some of the members of the society moving their lips in the naughty words as I went along.

"When the concert was ended there was a little private party in someone's home and Hertzmansky, the music publisher, rushed up to me in great excitement and said, 'Gruenfeld, that is a beautiful piece of music. I must publish it!' I told him he would have to see Johann about that, and he found Strauss and grasped him by the lapels and said 'Strauss, I must publish that at once! At once!'

"Strauss laughed. 'How can you publish it? It has risque lyrics and half of Vienna knows them. You can't print the words.' Hertzmansky retorted, 'We'll publish it without lyrics. That melody doesn't need lyrics.' Strauss shrugged his shoulders, and then I said, 'Hertzmansky, what do you intend to call it? You can't call it by its original name. That's pretty suggestive.' "

Gruenfeld paused again as he thought back across a quarter of a century. "Hertzmansky pondered for a moment and then he clapped his hands together. 'That song is the most typically Viennese music I have ever heard. We will call it the "Danube Waltz." Someone at the party said, 'Make it the "Blue Danube Waltz," or better yet, the "Beautiful Blue Danube." Strauss protested that the Danube was not blue. 'Not around Vienna, in any case,' he said. But now Hertzmansky was radiant. He put his arm around Strauss and said in quiet voice, 'Johann, from now on our Danube will be blue.' "

6.

From that Sunday on, Sigmund was a constant visitor at the Gruenfeld home. Gruenfeld played for him the same arrangement of the Strauss waltz that he had played at the concert, and thereafter when friends would call out requests for the artist to play, he always asked for the Strauss waltz. After several weeks of asking for the same thing, when he lifted his hand to speak Gruenfeld looked at him and said, "*Schon wieder, schon*

wieder," and without waiting to hear what he said, played the number.

It was with intense pleasure that Sigmund learned that Gruenfeld had accepted an invitation from Adam Romberg to go down to Belisce for the holidays that year. With the Gutmanns and their friends in Belisce as usual for the occasion, an exciting time seemed promised. The Gutmanns asked Karczag to spend the time with them too, and the impresario accepted, bringing his wife and son with him.

In all of Belisce there were just two grand pianos, one owned by the Gutmanns and the other by Adam Romberg. Whenever a ball was given in the great hall in the town it was necessary to bring one or the other of the instruments to the hall. In honor of the great pianist, the Gutmann piano was newly tuned and carted by a half a dozen stout men to the hall, and after the usual New Year's Day party, Gruenfeld went to the town hall and gave a concert. After the concert a gypsy orchestra appeared and a party started that lasted, with only brief interruptions, for three days and nights. During that time Baron Gutmann kept the hall filled with food and drinks of all kinds and Gruenfeld and the gypsies kept the music going almost without a pause.

Sigmund had cautioned Karczag not to tell his parents of his activities in the theatre and Adam and Clara Romberg found it easy to believe that their son's extracurricular activities were no more than that of any young man being educated in the city. Gruenfeld told them that Sigmund was at his home every Sunday morning and the Gutmanns assured the Rombergs that they saw him often. Sigmund told his father he was managing to pass his studies and Adam was satisfied.

The young man had been somewhat shocked at his father's appearance. Adam Romberg was then sixty, and he seemed to have aged years instead of months since Sigmund had been away. His hair was quite gray, but his mustache was as neatly waxed as

ever and his fine hands and fingers as carefully tended. One evening at home Sigmund was distressed to hear his father falter on a rapid passage on the piano. He saw him close his eyes, as though in pain, and then continue. Nothing however, diminished his sense of humor and his great zest for living. That holiday was the most joyous Sigmund had ever remembered.

The day finally arrived when Gruenfeld had to return to Vienna. He got a ticket for the train that left at four o'clock in the morning, the same train Sigmund used to take years before when he went to school in Pecs. The trip to Vienna required several changes en route and the four o'clock train was the only one which would make the necessary connection at the next junction point.

No one thought of sleep that night. A great farewell party was held in the Gutmann chateau, and some three-quarters of an hour before train time Adam Romberg disappeared. No one could find him, and, greatly disappointed, Gruenfeld said it was impossible to wait any longer. The party followed Gruenfeld through the streets of the village, singing to him as he walked. When they arrived at the station they found Adam waiting for them. Gruenfeld hugged him, saying, "Adam, I was worried. I thought you abandoned me at the last moment."

Adam twirled his mustache. "Abandoned you? Nothing of the kind."

The train was in the station. The signal sounded. Gruenfeld said: "Goodbye, my dear friends. I shall never, so long as I live, forget such a happy holiday. It has been one of the great times in my life. Thank you." He looked at the faces, seen in shadows in the flickering lights. "You are all such good people. God bless you all!" He put his arms around Adam and Clara. "Thank you, my old friends." Then he asked. "And now, all good things must end. Which compartment is mine?"

This was the moment Adam had waited for. "Compartment? There is a private car waiting for you!"

"Private car? My ticket doesn't call for that."

"Come with me," said Adam. With great ceremony he conducted Gruenfeld to the end of the train. He pointed to a freight car. "There is your private car," he said.

The doors of the freight were rolled open and Gruenfeld looked inside. There he saw the other grand piano, the one belonging to the Rombergs. There were benches around the piano and great casks of beer and dozens of bottles of champagne in buckets filled with ice. "It's too early for the party to end," Adam Romberg said simply.

"Well, for the love of the Almighty!" Gruenfeld exclaimed.

Adam invited everyone to enter the 'private car.' Some of the guests begged off, but the rest climbed aboard willingly. The train pulled out and Gruenfeld again started to play, accompanied by the ubiquitous gypsy band. Three hours later, at dawn, the junction point was reached and they learned that the train to which Gruenfeld had to change would be several hours late. The train on which they had arrived left, and as the group stood on the platform, shivering in the cold, Gruenfeld asked, "Well, what now, Adam? Do we remain here in the snow and dance to keep warm?"

Adam clapped his hands. "Nothing of the kind. My friend Count Maillard lives about fifteen minutes' walk from here. We will go to his castle."

"At this hour?" the pianist asked.

"Count Maillard is at home to me at any hour. And to you as well."

The friends tramped in the snow to the castle. Maillard, wakened from sleep, fell into the spirit immediately. A new party was started on the spot. The train Gruenfeld was to have

taken arrived and departed unnoticed and it was not until late that evening that Gruenfeld finally got off for Vienna.

7.

'Bettelstudent' closed soon after the New Year and Mariska was out of a job. She had not done badly with her part in the revival, however, and upon Sigmund's urging Karczag recommended her to the producer of a new farce that soon was to open in the Josefstadt Theater. Mariska gave a reading and got the part in the farce, which starred the famous comedian Eisenbach, and which was extremely risque, even by tolerant Viennese standards. A little later Mariska also was given the role of understudy to one of the principals. "From now on," she told Sigmund gleefully, "we pray each night that Liza falls and breaks her neck! Her leg, anyway!"

Mariska had moved from the rooming house into a small studio apartment, on the strength of her steady work, and she and Sigmund started immediately to study her new role. Theatrical problems were infinitely more fascinating than the routine problems offered in the technical school, which he still attended as regularly as he could. It meant nothing to him to work out some abstruse problem in higher mathematics; no matter what his parents thought, he knew that he would never apply any of the formulas and rules he was learning to the smallest building or the tiniest bridge. He was aware, more and more, that for what he wanted to do with his life the time he was spending in the technical school was an utter waste. From time to time he tried to think of a way by which he could persuade his parents to allow him to leave school and devote his whole time to music and the theatre. At the holidays, which just ended, he had planned to say something to them, but in the excitement of the celebrations he had not been able to bring the subject up. Besides, he seemed to lose something

of his independence when he was in Belisce. He was still too close to his childhood.

Working out problems of the theatre was something else again. Each scene had a key and he applied himself to discovering the key. The plays and operettas he saw continuously were his books, and the theatres were his classrooms. When he saw successful plays he sought to discover what about them had made their success; when he saw plays that should have gone over but which failed, he studied them to see what they had lacked.

He studied the plays as a whole, of course, but his chief interest was in the music; he learned to understand when the musical part of a show assisted the development of the theme, and when it only hampered it. At the same time, working steadily with Heuberger, he was given a classic education in the fundamentals of musical composition and orchestration. From time to time, as part of his studies and on his own, he composed and orchestrated small studies. Away from Heuberger, a classicist, he tried his hand on lighter compositions in the Viennese manner. He played these little pieces only for his friends, without thought, as yet, of attempting to get them published.

What knowledge he gained from study and observation he tried to convey to Mariska. With her as a vehicle, he worked out whatever problems of interpretation her roles would permit, and those hours with her were his happiest. Curled up in the comfortable studio, a fire hissing pleasantly from the gas heater, they talked theatre. She listened to him carefully these days and if she did not comprehend everything she was willing to go along with him.

The farce opened, and, as was expected with Eisenbach in the lead, was a great success, although it did rouse severe criticism in some quarters because of its bawdiness. There was some talk of appealing to the court authorities to close the play, but the commotion subsided and the show went on. It had won for itself,

however, a reputation as the fastest show in town, which did nothing to hurt the box office.

Sigmund had attended the opening night, of course, and was pleased to see that Mariska followed his instructions fairly faithfully. After the play had attained its unsavory reputation, however, it was almost impossible for him to return to the theatre. Regardless of his work there, he still was nominally a student in his teens attending the technical institute, and he knew he could not risk being seen by the Gutmanns or any of his family's other friends in the Josefstadt Theater.

About a month after the opening, when he called for Mariska at her studio in the late afternoon, he found her breathless. She had just got a message from the theatre that Liza was ill and that she would play the female lead that evening. She greeted Sigmund with a wild kiss and began to dance around the room with him, singing in happiness.

When she quieted down, he said, "We better rehearse it a little."

"No need to rehearse," she said, twirling around again. "I know it backward and forward. Let's go out and have some wine instead. Oh, my darling, this is the big chance, finally, at last!"

He was doubtful. "Are you sure you don't want to run through the part, just once, to make certain?"

"I can do it in my sleep. Come, let's go out. This room is too small for me the way I feel now!"

They went to the Cafe Stephansplatz and he never remembered seeing her so exhilarated. "You make the wine drunk," he said tenderly.

"Do I? Oh, Sigmund, my dearest Sigmund, I'm going to be such a great success. You won't be ashamed of me when you see me onstage tonight. I shall remember everything you have told me, everything."

His face fell. "My God, I forgot!"

"What?"

"I'm invited to the Gutmanns' tonight."

"Sigmund!"

He frowned. "I'll have to figure some way out of it. They are having a small gathering and our quartette is scheduled to play."

"You can't stay away from the theatre tonight," she said, dismayed.

"And I can't very well tell them I'm going to see that dirty show at the Josefstadt," he grinned. "The baroness thinks Ernoe and I are still children. Well, no matter. One way or another I'll get out of that party tonight. I'll be at the theatre."

When he arrived at the Gutmanns' a few hours later, he found the plans were somewhat changed. The baroness had acquired a pair of tickets for a performance of 'Tannhauser' at the opera house that evening. She gave the tickets to Ernoe and Sigmund, explaining the baron had decided to have a whist party. The other two players in the quartette joined the card players and Sigmund and Ernoe left the house with the opera tickets.

"I don't know what to do," Sigmund said. He explained about Mariska's luck. "I have to be at the Josefstadt Theater to see her. This may be the only time she plays that part."

"There's no problem," Ernoe said lightly. "We both have seen Wagner a half-dozen times. We'll give the tickets to someone waiting on line at the opera house and then we'll go to the Josefstadt and watch your little sweetheart."

They managed to get two good seats at the Josefstadt, and then stepped away until just before curtain time. Then they hurried into the darkened theatre.

Mariska performed well and Sigmund was gratified to see that she indeed gave the role the interpretation he had desired. She received a big hand at the end of her most important scene, and she flushed with delight when an usher brought a large bouquet

of flowers down the aisle and presented them to her. After the final curtain, they hurried backstage for the quickest of visits.

"Oh, Sigmund, how was I?" she cried, throwing her arms around him.

"Magnificent."

"Oh, I'm so glad you were able to see me. That awful Liza is going to be better tomorrow."

"That's a compliment to you," Sigmund said. "If you played the part badly she would remain out for a week."

"Those flowers," she said suddenly. "Oh, Sigmund, you always remember." She kissed him again. "I'm such a lucky girl."

"I won't be able to stay with you," he said. "Ernoe and I have to get back to the Gutmanns' in time for supper. The family thinks we're at the opera house."

Supper was being served when they arrived home. Sigmund kissed Baroness Gutmann's hand. "Madame," he said earnestly, "the opera was magnificent. I have heard 'Tannhauser' performed many times but never as it was tonight."

The baroness smiled. "I'm so glad that you and Ernoe were able to attend." She looked at Sigmund fondly. "I feel more and more that you are one of our own. I am going to write to your dear mother tomorrow and I shall tell her how you enjoyed the opera."

"Please do so, Madame," Sigmund said. "And thank you again for being kind enough to allow us to use the tickets."

As they walked away Ernoe leaned over and whispered, "You are the one who should be an actor, Romy." He mimicked his friend. " 'I have never heard "Tannhauser" performed so well'!"

"Well, tell me," Sigmund asked. "Did you ever enjoy the opera as much as you did tonight?"

The next morning on the way to school he bought the papers to see whether Mariska had received any notices. She did, in one

paper, and it was quite complimentary. He tore out the item and was about to throw the newspaper away when his eye came across another item. He froze in the street.

TENOR SUDDENLY SICK
OPERA PERFORMANCE CANCELED

He gripped the paper with icy hands and read the story. The tenor hero of 'Tannhauser' had collapsed in his dressing room just before curtain time and the opera was changed at the last minute. 'Marta' had been given instead.

He walked slowly to the school and wondered how many weeks would have to pass before he would be able to face the baroness again.

8.

Adam Romberg, feeling his age, decided he wanted to spend a little time in Vienna again before he would be unable to enjoy himself there, and so, that year, Sigmund's parents wrote to him that they would come to Vienna for the Easter holidays. This meant that Sigmund would not go to Belisce for that period as he usually did.

The letter came from the Rombergs during one of those periods when Sigmund was depressed at the time he was spending at the technical school—wasted time, in his reckoning of his life to come. He had been writing to his old friend, Professor Boggio, who had retired from the faculty in Osiek because of age and who was now spending his declining years in Trieste, and the old man, with all the force at his command, had urged Sigmund to come to some new arrangement with his parents. "Music is for you," his old teacher had written, "and you are for music. Each moment you throw away in a classroom filling your head with

useless knowledge is a moment you never again can recapture in your life."

He had spoken of his problems often to Victor Heuberger, and the master had agreed that for one who had such love of music and showed such an interest in its theories, it was a mistake indeed to follow some other career. It was rather a struggle for Heuberger to make this admission because he was an old friend of Adam Romberg and he was fully aware of the fact that Sigmund's parents opposed the idea of their son becoming a professional musician.

In Belisce, Sigmund found, he could not stand against his parents. There were too many memories and the habit of obedience was too strong. Their visit to Vienna, however, strengthened his hand unexpectedly. When his parents stepped from the train he felt quite the cosmopolitan. His parents had traveled, his father particularly, but the years in Belisce had somewhat rusticated them, and the noise and size and excitement in Vienna plainly impressed them. During their visit, Sigmund was the host; he took them to theatres, to restaurants where the headwaiters greeted him by name; to cafes where friends waved to him as he entered. As the days passed, he felt stronger and stronger in his position, and finally, before they were scheduled to return to Belisce, he brought up the subject of leaving school altogether.

The effect upon his parents was shocking, and if he were not so determined to go through with his resolution, if he were not so certain that his life lay in music, he would have dropped the idea. Again Adam Romberg trotted out the old arguments. He outlined the uncertainties of a musical career, and pointed out how professional musicians, unless they were virtuosi, scarcely made a living playing in restaurants or theatres. There was not much discussion about the possibilities of Sigmund *writing* music, for, thus far, little thought had been given to that. He had written a march for the Emperor's sister, it was true, but that almost was

a schoolboy joke. When he thought of himself as a professional musician, it was as a performer, or, at most, as the conductor of an orchestra, and it was on this ground that his parents argued with him.

The argument was strong, but Sigmund, with a conscious feeling of strength and support from what he had come to regard as his city, was unyielding. The discussion lasted half through the night and as it progressed Adam Romberg appeared to age more and more and Mrs. Romberg burst into tears continuously. Several times Sigmund almost gave in, but he realized that this was a crisis: if he failed to carry his point now he might as well give up for good.

It was not much before dawn when they finally went to bed without settling anything. In the morning Adam, tired and dispirited, dressed rapidly, and then announced that he wanted to have a talk with Victor Heuberger. "I must know what he thinks about all this," he said.

Mrs. Romberg and Sigmund ate breakfast silently. When they spoke they were careful to avoid the subject altogether, relieved to be quit of it even if only for a little while. Over coffee, Mrs. Romberg asked pleasantly, "Are you enjoying yourself in Vienna?"

"How could I help it?" he asked. "This city! It must be the only city in the world!"

"It makes me so happy to know that you see the Gutmanns as much as you do," Mrs. Romberg said. "With them here I feel that you are not entirely cut off from your family." Then she asked, "Who else do you see?"

"Oh, lots of people," he said easily. "You know."

"Lots of girls?" His mother smiled.

"Enough." He grinned back. "This is Vienna."

"Anything serious?"

"Not really."

His mother lifted the coffee cup to her lips. "How is Mariska Antal?"

He looked at her, startled. "What about her?"

"Don't you see quite a bit of her?"

"I see her."

"You haven't seen her since we came to Vienna," his mother said.

"She's been busy," he said.

"So busy that she had no time to say hello to us."

He said nothing. Then his mother leaned forward. She said quietly, "You have deliberately avoided bringing her to see your father and me, haven't you, Sigmund?" When he did not answer, she asked, "Why?"

He whistled silently. "Oh, I don't know, Mother. I've wanted to keep this visit sort of just you and Dad and me. We see so little of each other and I see Mariska whenever I want to anytime."

"Sigmund, it isn't that you're ashamed to bring her to your parents?"

"No, not ashamed." He flushed slightly. "She's different. I don't deny that. She's not like any of our other friends. She's in the theatre. They think and act differently in the theatre. I just wanted this to be our family. Mother, you must understand."

"I think I do understand, Sigmund. Now tell me this. She is not the only girl you see, see often, that is, is she?"

"Of course not."

"What about Rudolf von Meinfeld's daughter, Mathilde. Do you see her?"

"Yes, of course. We have gone to the opera several times. I've been to her home for dinner often. I like Mathilde."

"She is a lovely girl, Sigmund. Perhaps you can have her join us for an evening before we return to Belisce."

"Certainly. That's a splendid idea. We can all have dinner together and go to the theatre."

"And what about Gretchen Dormann? Her mother wrote to me that you took her out several times."

"I like Gretchen too, Mother. I like Mathilde." He stood up and began to pace up and down the room. Then he turned to her and said, swiftly: "Listen to me, Mother. Try to understand. I know what you are thinking. If I were serious, if I thought about marriage, if I wanted to settle down—I would see girls like that more often. They aren't girls one sees casually—too much. But marriage is a long way off. A long, long way off. You always talk about wanting to see me married and settled down and raising a family—I can understand that. I suppose every mother wants that. But I'm not ready for that. I don't want to go around seeing girls and starting things I am not ready to finish, just yet. Mariska —well, Mariska and I don't talk about marriage. We don't think about it. She has a career. We're good friends. We have wonderful times together. And it just doesn't go beyond that."

His mother smiled. "Your father keeps telling me that you are acting as a young man has to act. Never having been a young man, I don't know. Only—well, nothing. I think I hear your father's steps. I will just say, quickly, that I am relieved by what you have told me." She reached out to him and he knelt and kissed her.

Adam Romberg entered the room. He took off his hat and coat without speaking and then he sat down heavily. He put a cigar into his mouth and clamped his teeth on it.

"What did Herr Heuberger say?" Mrs. Romberg asked.

Adam fixed his eyes on his son. "It seems Sigmund has talent," he said shortly.

"Does that make you angry?" Sigmund asked.

"Heuberger is an old friend of mine but he is also a musician," Adam said. "He would not deny that a career in music is open to you if that is what you desire. He said that your work with him is unusual and that you have already composed music that shows

great promise." He looked at his wife helplessly. "Perhaps this is something we should not fight, my dear."

A compromise finally was reached. It was his father's idea and it served to postpone the decision after all. "You are required to serve one year in the army," he said. "Why not finish your first year at school here and then volunteer for your military service immediately? At the end of the year of military service we can discuss the matter again."

When his parents returned home Sigmund had a talk with Ernoe, who was studying chemistry and who also had decided that he might as well serve his year's term with the army at that time. They went to recruiting stations and took their physical examinations and then Sigmund began to make inquiries about the various available regiments. Ernoe had no problem: he simply wanted a good cavalry regiment. But Sigmund's requirements were a little more complex. He hated horses, to start with, and he wanted to make sure he would be in Vienna during the year's period.

The different elements of the Empire made up a seething realm, with national and racial conflicts at work all the time. In the centuries in which they had ruled this dangerous mixture the Habsburgs had learned many things. One of the most useful was the fact that the hatred of the various peoples could be used against them in such a way as to strengthen the throne. By playing one against the other, the rulers, including the latest, Franz Josef, held them all in check, and one of the ways in which this was done was the deployment of the regiments throughout the Empire.

Stationing nationals in their own part of the land would have been disastrous and would have given aid and comfort to the dozen-odd little nationalistic movements that were going on everywhere all the time. Instead, regiments were shifted around, and

these troops, stationed in what amounted almost to foreign countries, could always be depended on to put down any little uprising or demonstration. They were always troops of occupation, in effect.

In order to keep these troops from ever developing friends and connections in the distant places where they were stationed—a condition that might prove disastrous as far as the central government was concerned—the system was further refined, and the regiments were shifted regularly before they could establish any ties. Seldom did any regiment remain on duty in one place for more than a year or two; they were always strangers among strange people, and the soldiers were always quite willing to shoot down foreigners of the different races and religions.

Sigmund finally ascertained, to his great joy, that one of the greatest of all infantry regiments was going to be stationed in Vienna starting the following fall. This was the 19th Hungarian Infantry Regiment, whose former honorary colonel was the Crown Prince Rudolf, who had killed himself and his sweetheart at Mayerling some twenty years earlier. The present leader was the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew to Emperor Franz Josef and heir to the throne.

Sigmund applied for permission to enter the regiment as a one-year volunteer, and a few weeks later he received word that his application had been granted. At the same time Ernoe was informed that he had been accepted in the First Hussars, a crack cavalry regiment. Their tours of duty were scheduled to start the following fall.

VI

PRIVATE Sigmund Romberg, who had managed to serve in His Imperial Majesty's Army for seventy-two hours before getting into trouble, sprawled on his cot and, smoking cigarette after cigarette, wondered how the devil he was going to get out of the armory that evening. His tailor had just delivered his dress uniform, he had two tickets for the theatre, and a young lady was waiting for him. She was someone new, and very special. But the order from Captain Stanislaw Jellicheck had been specific: restricted arrest for ten days.

He knew there must be some way to work it. There were few things that couldn't be worked out, particularly for a one-year volunteer. But the particular way this order was to be circumvented was a mystery at the moment, and he was furious with himself because he had been in the army for three days and by now he should have known the answers.

He glanced at his watch. He had about fifteen minutes in which to make his break for freedom. Unless he could get away he would have to shout up a *Dienstmann* and send a message to the girl saying he couldn't keep their appointment. And that, surely, would be admitting defeat!

Although the one-year volunteers—those youths who had

passed the Matura—were privates, just as were the ordinary soldiers, they occupied a considerably different status in the regiments. As rookies, of course, they were regarded as all rookies are regarded by the oldtimers, but it never was forgotten that within a year almost all of these young volunteers would be officers. So the volunteers lived in a kind of halfway zone, not quite officers, but definitely not common soldiers either.

Their special status was recognized by the authorities and certain privileges were accorded them. The regiment was quartered in an armory called *Heumarkt Kaserne,* but Private Romberg found out almost immediately that he and any other volunteer who so desired could live outside the armory and eat his meals anywhere he pleased. A regulation uniform was issued for duty hours, but the volunteers also were permitted to have a dress uniform made for off-duty wear.

Sigmund's dress uniform hung before him on his locker. It was a gorgeous affair. The regulation uniform was made for use, but the dress uniform was for show alone, and, since the regiment was Hungarian, had the chief characteristic of Hungarian dress uniforms: the trousers were skin-tight. They were so tight one had to sit down and rise slowly. The tailor had been quite emphatic about that. The uniform was blue, with shining silver buttons. Other regiments stationed in Vienna had similar uniforms, different, perhaps, only in the color of the buttons or the shade of the high, tight collar.

It was the custom of the young future officers, on most festive occasions of a not purely military nature, merely to wear their blouses over ordinary civilian dress trousers. It was simple, when stopped by an officer after hours, to give a false name and the name of one of the other regiments.

On his third day, Private Romberg, exhausted with all the details of a military career, left the armory after duty and began

an evening of pleasure. Private Romberg neglected to get a pass, and, upon returning to the armory early in the morning, was stopped by an officer who happened to cross his path. Since his tailor-made uniform had not yet been delivered, he was in regulation issue, and it proved impossible to pass himself off as a member of another regiment. When the report of his violation had arrived at his company headquarters. his captain had automatically placed him in restrictive arrest, which meant that he not only had to eat and sleep in the armory, but spend all his off-duty hours there as well.

He got up from his cot and began to explore the armory, which was enormous. Presently he encountered a soldier wearing a uniform different from that of his own regiment. He offered the soldier a cigarette and started a conversation. He discovered that the soldier belonged to an artillery regiment and that the artillery regiment shared quarters in the armory with the Hungarian infantry regiment.

"That's very interesting," Private Romberg said.

"Of course," the soldier said, "we use a different gate than you do."

"Of course," Private Romberg said. Then he said, "What?"

"Yes, you go out by the Heumarkt Kaserne gate, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, we use the gate that leads to the Schwarzenberg Platz." The soldier started to walk away. "By the way," he said, "you're new around here, aren't you?"

"More or less," Private Romberg admitted.

"Well, you probably know this, but if you ever get restricted to the armory, you can always get out by leaving through our gate. Our boys use your gate when they're not supposed to go out."

Private Romberg offered the soldier another cigarette. "I thank you," he said. "And now, if you will excuse me . . ."

2.

The company marched back and forth in the Prater. The late fall sun beat down upon them. The drill sergeant barked out his orders, back and forth, back and forth. The regimental officers watched with professional disapproval.

The day started with reveille at six in the morning. By seven, the daily routine began. Each morning, from Monday to Friday, the rookies, both volunteers and regulars, were marched out to the Prater for drill and exercises in basic maneuvers. The drill lasted four hours, after which the regulars returned to the armory and the volunteers went to classrooms. Until six in the evening they studied military matters—theories, history, problems of supply and logistics, courtesies and traditions. From six o'clock on, if they were not being punished for anything, they were free to leave the armory and roam Vienna until ten at night.

This was a Friday, and as the troops marched back and forth in the Austrian version of the Prussian goose-step, a somewhat modified goose-step, Sigmund gave thanks that the weekend had finally arrived. Two or three days before and he would have sworn it never would show up.

The four hours of drill ended and the volunteers marched off to classes. He applied himself with difficulty to his books. Books were things which had never appealed to him in the years he went to school, and the fact that they were books on military matters made them no more attractive now. But he knew he had to get through his subjects unless he wanted to have to go on serving in the army as a soldier for three years.

The day's work finally wound itself up and the young men hurried from their classrooms. There was time for a quick shower, a changeover into the dress uniforms, and then, after the brief formation, he would be free for the evening.

The men finally were lined up on the armory floor. Captain Jellicheck appeared. There was a thunderous order, "Attention!" The volunteers stiffened, feeling the seams of their tight trousers cutting into them. Captain Jellicheck ordered the men at ease, and then he looked them over.

Captain Stanislaw Jellicheck was a sophisticated and worldly gentleman who had found the army a pleasant career. He took his military responsibilities with just the necessary amount of seriousness and had received the orders to come to Vienna for duty with a great deal of pleasure. Returning with his regiment to Vienna after some years in the provinces was like coming back from exile. He did not know how long his good fortune would last and he meant to enjoy himself as much as he could while it did.

A tall, pleasant-faced man with somewhat tired blue eyes, he walked up and down among his volunteers and inspected their appearance. He thought, as he always thought, that they belonged more on a stage than in a real army, but that's the way the Imperial Army was, and would always be. When he finished his inspection he returned to the head of the men and told them that he had a special order for them.

"As you should know, gentlemen, His Excellency General Otto von Bruehl died the other day. This great warrior, as you should know from your studies in military history, was one of the finest flowers of the Imperial Army. He was always an inspiration for his men." Captain Jellicheck paused for a moment. It was an amusing game, he thought. Of course every one of the students in front of him knew that General von Bruehl was chiefly famous for the number of children he had left scattered in all parts of the Empire. "To continue, gentlemen," he said, "General von Bruehl is to be buried tomorrow. Now as you soon will discover, the Imperial Army, in which you have the honor to serve, is famous for the funeral ceremonies it provides for departed

officers of general or field marshal rank. It is one of the things the Imperial Army is noted for. I believe I can say with safety that in no other army in the world is there so impressive a ceremony for high-ranking officers.

"Now we have reached a great honor. The order is for the 19th Hungarian Infantry to provide the band and a company of soldiers for a military guard of honor." He paused again and looked at the young men with a twinkle in his eyes. "The order calls for the regular soldiers to form the honor guard," he said. Then when the volunteers had expressed their relief, he went on: "However, the order also calls for the volunteers of this regiment to form a special guard. I know how proud you gentlemen will be to know that you were not forgotten when the ceremonies were conceived."

Captain Jellicheck glanced at a sheet of paper in his hand. "Gentlemen, you will be required to appear at the Stefanskirche tomorrow afternoon at three o'clock. You may groan."

The volunteers groaned.

"Good. Now it is not as bad as it sounds. You will form the guard in front of the church only until everyone is inside for the ceremony. Then the regulars will march to the cemetery for the funeral. You will be dismissed as soon as the church service is over, so you can tell all your lady friends that the weekend will not be a total loss. And after all, gentlemen, a General Otto von Bruehl does not die every day. Are there any questions?"

A young man stepped forward. "Sir."

"Yes, Private Lustig?"

"Sir, will it be permitted for us to wear our dress uniforms for the ceremony? Then when we are dismissed it will not be necessary for us to return to the armory to change."

Captain Jellicheck pursed his lips. "Private Lustig, you will go far. Yes, gentlemen, I believe it will be perfectly all right to

wear your dress uniforms for the ceremony. Now, if there are no further questions . . . Company dismissed!"

Shortly before three o'clock the following afternoon, the volunteers arrived in the square in front of the church, and there were formed into a double column and ordered to attention. They remained rigid as the great figures of the realm arrived to pay their last respects to the deceased general. To the right of the volunteers was the company of regulars. To the left was the famous regimental band. In front of the three detachments stood Captain Jellicheck, detailed to command the three groups.

There was a ripple of excitement. A carriage pulled up in front of the church and a figure stepped down. He nodded somberly to the crowds who called his name and then he entered the church. It was the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who, among other things, was the honorary colonel of the regiment. His appearance was totally unexpected and the soldiers and volunteers instinctively straightened even more rigidly as the august heir to the throne passed them.

There was no thought now of dismissing the volunteers. Not with the Archduke around. The men remained at attention in front of the church as the long service dragged itself out. Then the doors opened and presently the Archduke stepped out. Captain Jellicheck saluted stiffly. "Is there anything Your Imperial Highness desires of his troop?" he asked in a clear voice.

The Archduke waved his hand wearily. "Nothing, Captain. That is, just have them pass in review. Nothing else."

The orders were given. The band broke into the regimental marching song. The troop was ordered to march. The volunteers stiffened as though steel bars had been thrust down their backs. They were marching in front of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand!

And then Private Romberg's trousers split.

3.

With Ernoe busy in another regiment, Sigmund turned to comrades in his own group for companionship, and presently his best friend among the volunteers was a young Hungarian lawyer named Janos Szabados. The axiom that opposites attract operated in this instance; there could be no two persons less alike than Private Romberg and Private Szabados.

The lawyer, who came from a small town in Hungary, was a fiery dreamer; thin, intense, dark, he was a passionate patriot. Before he entered the army his patriotism was reserved for his native land. Now that he was serving the Empire, his patriotism had multiplied, grown beyond control, so that now it overflowed and included everything, the Empire, the army, the regiment. Everything.

He regarded himself as consecrated in some way for the greater glory of the Empire. He considered his military duties as sacred as those of any priest. One day, he was confident, Private Janos Szabados would be called; when that day came he would not be found wanting.

Shortly before Christmas of that year Captain Jellicheck, in the morning formation, announced that the volunteers had been accorded great honor. Sigmund sighed. By then he had come to understand the curious language of the army. A great honor simply meant work somewhere. Private Szabados, standing next to him, straightened, however, and a great look of anticipation appeared on his face. The word 'honor' was a clarion call to Private Szabados.

"You have been assigned to a special guard duty," Captain Jellicheck said. "It is an honor which I am sure you will appreciate for the rest of your military careers. Gentlemen, you have been ordered to guard duty at the Hofburg!"

The Hofburg was the official residence of the Emperor. Janos Szabados burst into a great smile. Guarding the Emperor in the Hofburg! Captain Jellicheck dismissed the men. Private Szabados grabbed his friend's arm. "Romy, do you realize what this means?"

Sigmund looked at the thin face, the eyes that were glowing with a passionate fervor. "Hell, yes," he said. "It means we have to work tonight. And I had an appointment." He shook his head. "She'll never believe this excuse!"

"I thought Mariska was working," Private Szabados said innocently.

"Mariska isn't the only girl in Vienna," Sigmund said. "This is something I've been working on for weeks."

Szabados grabbed his arm. "How can you talk about appointments and women at a time like this? Don't you realize that we'll be guarding the Emperor? We, the volunteers of the 19th Hungarian Infantry, will be entrusted with the safety of His Majesty!"

"Janos, Janos," Sigmund said. "In the first place we don't even know if the Emperor will be there. In the second place who would want to harm the old gentleman, especially in his own home?" He pursed his lips. "I'll have to send a message with a *Dienstmann*. Unless I could get out of this someway. But I guess it's impossible. Of all nights!"

"Romy, I'm shocked," Private Szabados said. "This is a sacred duty!"

The changing of the guard at the Hofburg was as full of tradition and as complicated as the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. The posts were divided into categories. Some of the post had to be manned at all times; others were active only from six in the evening until five the following morning.

The ninety members of the volunteer detachment were divided into three groups. Thirty men were to be on two-hour guard duty

at any given time; thirty others on the alert outside the guardhouse, and the remaining thirty resting up inside the guardhouse. The groups rotated. Men on duty were armed; the weapons of the others were stacked neatly outside the guardhouse.

Just before the volunteers were to be assigned to their posts, Captain Jellicheck made a brief speech. He informed the men that in a great sense the destiny of the Empire rested upon them for the next twenty-four hours. Private Szabados accepted this statement literally.

The young Hungarian had studied a chart of the layout of the place which was hung in the guardhouse for the information of the troops. And upon that chart his quick eyes had found a post which seemed to him to be the holiest of the holy. This was the station just outside the bedchamber of the Emperor. As Captain Jellicheck began to assign the men, Private Szabados saluted, obtained permission to speak, and then asked if he might volunteer for this particular post. He might well volunteer for it; it was not a post that attracted anyone else. No one else wanted to spend half the night in dread of being surprised in some little mistake by the Emperor himself. Captain Jellicheck willingly handed the assignment over to Private Szabados, musing, as he did, over the fact that in every group there was a Szabados, and what would the army do without them?

The post outside the bedchamber was one of those which had to be manned only through the evening and night. Private Szabados took the first tour, between six and eight in the evening, and although even he, in his exaltation, could not imagine the Emperor tucked away in bed at six in the evening, still it might be.

The station was at the end of a corridor on the first floor of the palace. The corridor was about twelve feet wide and almost a quarter of a city block in length. At one end was the huge door leading to the Imperial bedchamber. The corridor itself was bisected by a broad marble staircase which came up from below

and continued up to the top floor. At the farthest end of the corridor was a small iron spiral staircase which also wound its way from the cellar to the top floor.

Upon stationing Private Szabados at his post, the corporal of the guard pointed to a small electric switch on the wall. "Pay your greatest attention to this device, Private Szabados," the corporal said solemnly. "You will note there are three positions for the switch. It is now pointing straight up. That is the neutral position. In this position nothing happens, as now. Now, all your attention! When the switch is moved to the left, it signals a fire. A red light goes on in front of the guardhouse. However, and this is the most important of all. When the switch is moved to the right it means quite another thing. It means the Emperor is in danger. This flashes a green light at the guardhouse. Is that clear, Private Szabados?"

"Yes, Corporal."

"Repeat the instructions."

"Left is fire, middle is neutral, and right means the Emperor is in danger."

"Correct, Private Szabados. Consider yourself now on duty."

For two hours Private Szabados paced up and down, tense and alert. At eight o'clock he heard the steps of the relief and he was marched back to the guardhouse. He looked around the guardhouse and saw his friend Romberg stretched out on a cot. He sat down next to him and shook him. Sigmund, who was dozing, opened a tired eye. Private Szabados reported his experience. He found there was nothing he could say beyond the fact that he had marched up and down a corridor for two hours. Sigmund listened courteously, but when Szabados told him of this miracle for the sixth time he turned over and went to sleep. From ten o'clock until midnight Private Szabados remained on the alert in front of the guardhouse, and then at midnight he returned to his post outside the Emperor's bedroom. This time there was a much

greater chance that Franz Josef actually was sleeping inside and Private Szabados hoped he was sleeping well, knowing he was being fully protected.

It was deadly quiet. The marble floors of the corridor were covered with a heavy rubber mat and Private Szabados was grateful for the fact that the Emperor would not be disturbed by the sounds of his heavy boots. He marched up and down in silence. Minutes passed. His rifle began to get a little heavy. He began to grow drowsy. The horror of that thought shocked him into wakefulness, but then he began to nod again. The possibility of falling asleep at this post of all posts made him tremble. He began to invent devices to keep awake. He counted the number of steps it took him to march up and down the corridor. When this lost interest he began to count the number of nails in the walls.

It was in the middle of the second hour of his tour, just about one-thirty in the morning, when he first heard the noise. It was a distant and stealthy sound and appeared to come from the far end of the corridor, where the spiral staircase twisted its way upward. Private Szabados no longer was sleepy. He woke to an explosion of alertness. He slipped a clip of five bullets into his rifle. He stopped in his tracks and held his breath so he could hear more clearly. There was no mistake. Someone was coming up the spiral staircase. Private Szabados leaned forward. He cocked his rifle. The thought occurred to him that if he fired a shot in the enclosed corridor the reverberation might be so loud the Emperor would suffer a heart attack and die. The thought covered him with an icy sweat. He closed the firing pin and fixed his bayonet and again set himself to wait. Meanwhile he tried to remember all the instructions he had received during his hours of drilling with fixed bayonet.

The footsteps were getting louder. Szabados was certain there now was some plot afoot. Perhaps against the life of the Emperor. Perhaps this night was chosen because on guard were

only apprentice volunteers. Private Szabados smiled grimly. Volunteer or not, he would show whoever was coming up those stairs that he was no amateur in the handling of his gun.

His mind was working coolly and swiftly now. He remembered the switch. With no hesitation, with no nervousness, he grasped the switch and threw it to the right, signaling that the life of the Emperor was in danger. Then he whirled and raced down the corridor, bayonet in front of him, a deadly determination in his eyes, in time to find the old night watchman wheezing up the final step of the spiral stairway. The watchman looked at the tense guard. He pushed the shining point of the bayonet to one side with a gesture of disgust. "What can you expect?" he asked. He punched the clock that was strapped to his side and then started up the spiral staircase to the next floor.

When the green light flashed in front of the guardhouse, for the first time in perhaps a quarter of a century the soldiers on the alert picked up the alarm. Sixty men raced to the stacked rifles. Captain Jellicheck burst from his quarters, buttoning his blouse. He waved a naked sword and ordered the men to follow him. At the same time the alarm went off in another quarter of the Hofburg where the regular palace police were stationed. The officer in command there roused his squad of men and also pulled a lever which summoned a battalion of soldiers on duty outside the palace. The battalion commander brought his soldiers into the palace double-time, after sending a messenger to higher headquarters with the alarm. Word finally was brought to the commanding general of the Vienna District, the city burgomaster, and the chief of police.

It was Captain Jellicheck, sword swinging in air, followed by his loyal volunteers, who arrived outside the Emperor's bedchamber first. By this time everyone in the palace was awake; the Emperor himself undoubtedly would have been awakened as well if he were not at the moment asleep in his castle at Schoenbrunn.

When Captain Jellicheck arrived he found Private Janos Szabados and no one else. Private Szabados had collapsed. He was seated on the floor sobbing, his rifle across his legs. "Relieve me, I'm sick," said Private Szabados.

4.

With the cold weather on hand Friday maneuvers were scheduled. For this purpose the forested country outside Vienna, usually around Kahlenberg, was selected.

Private Romberg now was Corporal Romberg. And since, in the eyes of the Hungarian officers and noncommissioned officers who managed the regiment he was virtually a native of Vienna, he normally was given command of a platoon on these exercises.

The first Friday that the men were lined up in the armory prior to leaving for the maneuvers they were astonished to see an enormous pile of broken stone in one corner of the building. The reason for the presence of the stone soon was made clear to them by Captain Jellicheck. "The purpose of these exercises," said the captain, "is to prepare you in some small way for the rigors of war. It is desired that actual field conditions be simulated whenever possible. Now the weight of your field equipment is known. Therefore each man will fill his knapsack to the weight of the field equipment with some of that choice, selected stone you see lying in the corner. And each man will be inspected before he leaves, so don't try to short-weight yourself." Captain Jellicheck looked at the men quizzically. "First, of course," he said, "you may groan."

One by one the men packed the stones into their knapsacks. When they returned to their quarters that night after maneuvers they were a crippled group of young men. Shoulders, backs, necks ached with the furies. There were some, in fact, who were

unable to dance that weekend. Corporal Romberg decided this was a problem that required some thought. He thought.

The solution turned out to be quite simple. Because of their status as part of the future officer corps, the volunteers followed directly behind the regimental band on the march out to the maneuver ground. Corporal Romberg spoke to several of the other volunteers and a hat was passed around. The sum of ten kronen was collected and then Corporal Romberg sought out the drum major of the band.

The next week the formation was called to order. Again Captain Jellicheck spoke to his men. "Gentlemen," he said. "It has come to my attention that something other than tea or water is being carried in the canteens of some of the volunteers on these maneuvers. I desire to call to your attention that regulations state nothing more than either tea or water may be kept in the canteens. Specifically the regulations forbid liquors. Now, gentlemen, to the rock pile."

Knapsacks were loaded, lifted to the backs of the men, and inspection held. The order was given and the band struck up a lively march and left the armory, followed by the volunteers and the regulars. The regiments marched smartly through the city and finally the outskirts were reached. At this point the band leader called for a particularly noisy march, with a tremendous brass accompaniment and incessant pounding of the drums. One by one the stones were removed from the knapsacks in the deserted suburb and one by one they were allowed to drop gently onto the dirt road.

The site for the current exercises was reached. The men were ordered at rest. The volunteers, separated from the soldiers, relaxed gratefully on the hard ground. Captain Jellicheck appeared. It was very cold. The men were huddled in their heavy coats. Captain Jellicheck surveyed the group. "It's cold, is it not?" he asked, conversationally.

The nearest man answered, "Yes, sir."

"Well, kick in," said Captain Jellicheck.

The man looked puzzled.

Captain Jellicheck cast his eyes up and down. He walked over to Corporal Romberg. "Your canteen, Corporal," he ordered.

Corporal Romberg handed his captain his canteen. The officer unscrewed the cap, smelled, and then took a deep drink. "That is excellent tea—aged in the wood," he said. He reached behind the corporal and touched his knapsack lightly. "Smart soldiers always have some rags at least to stuff these empty bags with," he said, still in a conversational voice. He took another swig. "You can always tell rookies," he said. "But this is excellent tea. Thank you, Corporal." He handed back the canteen, glanced at his men, and then walked away. The icy cold soon was less penetrating.

Captain Jellicheck returned thirty minutes later with some orders in his hand. He reformed the men and then divided them into platoons of five men each. "I hope you are sufficiently refreshed, gentlemen," he said, "for now we are about to commence our exercises. You are to assume that the enemy is located somewhere in the forest around you. You will go out on reconnaissance and maintain the greatest of battle caution. You will endeavor to find the location of the enemy without being yourselves discovered. Upon the signal from the trumpet all patrols will return here immediately. Are there any questions?"

Corporal Romberg diligently led his platoon of men into the bare forest. It seemed colder than ever. Corporal Romberg called his men to a halt and then gathered them around him. "My friends," he said, "the main thing for soldiers when they get out on the field of battle is not to be caught by the enemy. If you are caught you are made prisoner and then you are of no use whatsoever to your country for the balance of that war. I propose that we make certain we will not be caught by the enemy today. Follow me!"

He led them through the woods and presently they found themselves in front of a little *gastube*. "There is probably no place in the forest where the enemy is less likely to look for us than in a restaurant. Let us go in."

An hour later the men, relaxed with their sixth or eighth beer apiece and charmed by the buxom girl who brought the steins to them, heard the sound of the trumpet as though from a distance. The men started to get up but their corporal waved them back to their seats. Another hour passed and he finally called them to order and marched them to the nearest trolley line where they boarded a tram and rode back to the city. They entered the armory. Captain Jellicheck was waiting for them. He informed them that of all the patrols only that under the command of Corporal Romberg had not been seen anywhere, by either friend or foe. "I do not know whether that is a compliment or not," said Captain Jellicheck.

"Sir, I know these woods perfectly," said the corporal.

"Where were you when the trumpet blew?"

"We did not hear the trumpet."

Captain Jellicheck nodded. "Someday you must show me where you and your men hid out."

Corporal Romberg saluted. "With pleasure, sir."

Captain Jellicheck rubbed his chin. "And the wine better be good," he said.

VII

At the end of May there took place one of the gala occasions of the year, the opening of the Venedig en Wien, an exclusive amusement park in an enclosed part of the Prater. The opening of the Venedig en Wien was considered by many Viennese to be the official start of spring. There were restaurants and cafes in the little park and also an open-air theatre which this season was to open with a new operetta called 'Miss Hock von Holland.'

Corporal Romberg bought his pair of seats for the opening night of the operetta several weeks in advance, as was necessary. His tickets called for opening night, regardless of the day of the week. It turned out that the opening was to be an a Saturday and Sigmund and Mariska made their plans.

However, when the troops were formed at eleven o'clock that Saturday preparatory for dismissal for the weekend, Corporal Romberg was dismayed to hear himself announced as corporal of the day for the next twenty-four-hour period. The duty was not a difficult one but it required the noncommissioned officer specified to remain in the armory for the entire long period during which he held the office. Upon this announcement, the troops were dismissed, and Corporal Romberg assumed his new duties.

The appointment at that particular time was in the nature of a catastrophe. The night when the Venedig en Wien was opening! Something obviously had to be done, and still, what was to be done must be accomplished with skill, because a series of escapades in recent weeks had somewhat lowered the Romberg status on the company books.

For several hours he pursued his duties, inspecting such things as toilets, bunks, the kitchen, and then about four o'clock in the afternoon, after he had ascertained there was not a single commissioned officer of his unit left in the armory, he looked for a regular-army top sergeant and asked a hypothetical question. "What would happen," he asked, "if the corporal of the day became ill? Suppose all the officers are gone and the corporal of the day is so ill he cannot continue with his duties?"

Since Corporal Romberg was less than six months away from being a commissioned officer, he got a reasonable answer from the top sergeant. "In that case, he would appoint or secure another corporal to take over from him." The sergeant continued after a moment. "Such unexpected things are not unusual, Corporal. It is quite probable that the matter would go no further."

"That answer is worth at least five kronen," the corporal of the day declared. He went over to the company's rest room and looked around. He found, as he half-expected, Corporal Janos Szabados, deep in a technical manual for field officers. He threw himself on the mercy of his friend. He explained about the opening of the operetta and the tickets he had. Corporal Szabados was dubious. Corporal Romberg pointed out that, in addition to doing him a favor, a favor he would never forget, he, Corporal Szabados, would in fact be helping himself. He would be gaining additional experience as corporal of the day. "I will only be gone until early tomorrow morning," Corporal Romberg urged as he saw his friend weaken. "I will be back by five o'clock. All you

have to do is tell me what happened between six o'clock this evening and five o'clock tomorrow morning." Corporal Szabados finally agreed to take over. Corporal Romberg changed immediately into his dress uniform and hurried away.

He picked up Mariska and hired a fiacre and directed the driver to the park. They arrived at the theatre in time. They were directed to their seats. He stood to one side and allowed Mariska to enter first. Then he sat down next to her and looked at the stage with anticipation.

Then he heard a familiar voice. "Your duties take you far from the armory, Corporal. Is the Prater now included in the jurisdiction of the corporal of the day?"

He turned with a gasp. He looked past Mariska. Seated next to her was Captain Jellicheck.

The captain, with an expressionless face, turned to a lady at his left. "Madame, I would like to present Corporal Sigmund Romberg, who presently is on guard duty at the armory. Corporal Romberg, this is Madame Jellicheck."

Sigmund swallowed hard. "It is an honor," he said. "And may I present Miss Antal. Captain and Madame Jellicheck."

The lights lowered.

"I hope the play will be good," said Captain Jellicheck.

The play may very well have been good. Sigmund would never know. He sat slumped in his seat, unusually quiet, and during intermission he did little more than answer questions asked him direct. Captain Jellicheck on the other hand was in splendid form. He divided his time and attention equally between his wife and Mariska, told amusing anecdotes, and made himself generally agreeable. Toward the end of the play Sigmund began to thaw out; he thought that he would not, after all, be brought before a firing squad the next morning. When the final curtain fell, he recovered himself enough to suggest that the four of them visit a

good cafe. The captain and his wife were charmed to accept.

One cafe led to another and it was not too long before the corporal found his tongue again and set himself to be specially pleasing to Madame Jellicheck, in the accepted manner of the city. The captain continued to find Mariska charming and it was not until five o'clock in the morning that the quartette broke up.

"We have had a perfectly wonderful time," said Madame Jellicheck.

"That is true," said the captain.

"Thank you," Sigmund said. "We enjoyed it as well."

Madame Jellicheck bubbled on. "You must visit us at our home before long."

Sigmund looked at his captain.

"Certainly, Corporal Romberg," the captain said.

"Thank you, sir."

"Charming," Jellicheck said. "Thank you very much for a very delightful time. I will not forget it."

Corporal Romberg had time to bring Mariska to her door and then hasten to the armory. He changed back to his regulation uniform and then resumed his duties. Corporal Szabados reported on the incidents of the night. Sigmund thanked his friend and then awaited the regular morning formation.

The men were lined up. Captain Jellicheck appeared. As corporal of the day, Sigmund saluted and made his report.

"Two soldiers overstayed their passes and now are in the guardhouse," he intoned sonorously. "One man reported in in an intoxicated condition. He also is in the guardhouse. One man reported sick and was taken to the hospital. That is all, sir."

"The corporal of the day is relieved from his duties and a new corporal of the day will assume the duties," Captain Jellicheck said. Corporal Romberg saluted. The captain shook his head slowly. "This," he murmured, "could happen only in Vienna."

2.

For several days Sigmund watched himself carefully and did nothing to attract him to the attention of Captain Jellicheck. He didn't want to push his luck too far. He was a little frightened, however, when he received a summons to appear at the captain's office about a week after the corporal of the day incident. He was relieved to discover that he was wanted for nothing more than to take a detail of men to the official army bakery to pick up the next five days' ration of bread for the troops.

The bread detail was regarded as somewhat of a joke among the men. It was not exactly a punishment but it was a little ridiculous. Sigmund knew that Captain Jellicheck was paying off the score and he was happy the sentence was so light.

The bakery was in the first *Bezirk,* or district. The bread was brought to the armory in a unique manner. Large nets were stretched between poles. The bread was put in the net and two men carried the poles on their shoulders, hauling the bread in a sort of stretcher.

"This is the first time you have been assigned to the bread detail, is it not, Corporal?" asked Captain Jellicheck.

"Yes, sir."

"Well. You will make yourself and your detail as inconspicuous as possible. Choose streets that are not used too much."

"Yes, sir." Corporal Romberg saluted and left. He took his men through back streets and at the bakery saw to it that the bread was piled high in the net stretchers with military precision. Shortly before one o'clock the men, in single file, started back for the armory, their corporal in front.

The men marched with as much military carriage as was possible while holding on to the ends of two poles and balancing stacks of bread in swaying nets. As was usual, passersby made

joking remarks about the dangerous life of the soldier, and inquired, loudly, about the price of bread that day. Corporal Romberg's lips began to twitch.

It was at this moment there came through the streets the sound of a military band. The soldier marching behind Sigmund glanced up. "That must be the guard relief from the Burg."

A young girl in the street called out, "Are you bringing home the wounded men in stretchers, Corporal?" Then, at the next corner, the paths of the two military formations crossed. Corporal Romberg held up his hand for his detail to halt. He watched the band and then the company of guards pass. When the last of the soldiers crossed in front of him, motivated by an inexplicable compulsion he gave a curt order for his men to fall in.

The bread carriers, aware of the ignominy of their assignment, roared with appreciation and stepped in behind the marching men with enthusiasm. They joined in the easy route step, their nets swinging in rhythm. Word passed down through the ranks of the men ahead of them and presently everyone from the band leader back was aware of the odd rearguard.

It is possible that nothing more would have happened, if, at the Ringstrasse, the officer in command of the guards had not happened to espy a general. He immediately called his men to attention, ordered them out of the easy-going route step into the rigid parade march. Corporal Romberg was compelled to issue the same order to his men, who began to march in the semi-goose-step, holding on to the poles.

Here and there a loaf of bread, unable to stand the pace, tumbled into the street.

As the men approached the general, the guard's officer ordered, "Eyes, right!"

The general snapped to attention as the men saluted him.

When the bread detail approached the general Corporal Romberg ordered, "Eyes, right!"

The bread, as though gesturing to the astonished officer as well, tumbled at his feet.

Later, in imposing twenty instead of the usual ten days' restricted arrest, Captain Jellicheck added, "And don't try using the artillery gate, this time. I *mean* restricted arrest for twenty days."

3.

The year of military service concluded as usual with large-scale maneuvers conducted in the spring by a major portion of the Imperial Army in the forests and mountains of Bohemia. When these great exercises were concluded, the regiment was returned to Vienna and the volunteers were given their final examination. Sigmund was elated to discover that he passed this test and was officially notified that he now was a reserve officer in the Imperial Army.

Normally that would have terminated his military career for the time being. As a reserve officer he was subject to recall for a two-month period every two years for additional training. However, at this time there was a considerable amount of border unrest and a battalion from Romberg's regiment was dispatched to the scene, and for the next eight months, as a subaltern on active duty, Sigmund served with his men on patrol duty along the borders of Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. Upon the conclusion of this extraordinary duty, he was discharged and informed that his eight months of service would preclude his being recalled again, save in an emergency, for the next four years.

Quit of the army, in the early part of 1909 Sigmund visited his family in Belisce. He had spent a year training as a volunteer and eight months on active duty; nevertheless he found that his mother and father were expecting him to return to his studies in

the technical institute. There was nothing in the world that was further from his mind at the time. He refused to return to school and insisted that he still desired to make music his career.

For two weeks old Adam Romberg would have nothing to do with his elder son. He would not speak to him and acted as though he were not in the house. Sigmund, pained at the situation, refused, however, to end it by giving in to his father. Mrs. Romberg sought for a solution, but both father and son refused to yield. It was the mother, finally, who suggested that another compromise might be made.

"I remember," she said to her son, "that you have always talked of traveling. You are free from the army for several years to come. Why don't you take a little trip abroad? Go to England, even to America if you like. Stay away for a year. Then when you return we will try to talk this matter out. It is impossible to settle anything now. You are still feeling the effects of your twenty months in the army and I can understand how childish it must sound for us to ask you to return to the life of a schoolboy. Perhaps after a year of traveling you will look with more favor on the idea."

Adam Romberg, suffering from the attitude he felt he had been forced to take with his son, accepted the idea with enthusiasm. "We have many connections in London," he said. "I will send you some letters of introduction to members of our firm. Perhaps when you see the scope of the Gutmann enterprises you will feel more desire to become a part of it."

4.

She said: "I would have to learn to know you again. I don't know you in civilian clothing. I've seen you in uniform for almost two years and you are strange in civilian clothing. I would have to learn to know you again but you are going away."

"When I come back," he said.

"Yes, when you come back. All the time you are away I shall think of you in civilian clothing. Then when you return it won't be so hard to know you."

"A year will be as nothing, Mariska," he said.

"I shall keep telling myself that," she said. "Each morning when I wake and I think that I shall not see you that day, or the next, or the one after that, I shall tell myself that a year is a very short time. It is just three hundred and sixty-five of those wakenings, and each day it will be one less. I shall tell myself all that, Sigmund. When I wake in the morning and I know that I will not see you that day, that we shall not meet for a glass of wine in the afternoon, or for dinner, or to work on a new role in the apartment, or to ride in the Prater, or to go up to Kahlenberg, or to ride in the boat down the Danube, I shall tell myself that. I shall tell myself that it is just one day less."

"I probably will return before the year is up," he said.

"No. It's funny, but I know. You will not be back in the year. When I tell myself it is one day less I will only be fooling myself. Because when the year is gone by you will still be away and perhaps for another year and perhaps for longer than that."

He took her hand. "In less than a year, Mariska. Listen to me, next May we shall again come up to Kahlenberg and sit on the grass and look down on Vienna."

"Just remember me in May wherever you may be," she said.

"Here. Next to you."

"Wherever."

He thought about what Ernoe had said when he returned to Vienna with the news. Ernoe had congratulated him and he had asked Ernoe to come with him for the year, what fun they would have traveling together, and Ernoe had shaken his head and he had said, "No, Romy, you be the wanderer. You go and then come back and tell me about it. As for me, everything there is in the

world lies in Vienna. I can find no more beautiful women, no more beautiful horses, no more beautiful places to lose my money. What would I seek elsewhere?"

"Why should I go then?" Sigmund had asked.

"You are different," Mariska had answered. "For us there is nothing beyond Vienna. We are not restless."

"Am I restless?" he had asked.

"You must go," Ernoe repeated. "You must go and see it all and then come back to us in Vienna and tell us what you have seen." Then Ernoe had risen abruptly. He had held out his hand. "*Auf wiedersehen,* Romy. You probably will be back before I realize you are gone. I probably will remain in Herr Mueller's all the time you are away. If my luck holds out the rest of what I own probably will belong to the good Herr Mueller by then."

"*Wiedersehen,* Ernoe," he had said.

Then he and Mariska had boarded the *Stadtbahn* in the Schottenring and at Nussdorf had changed to the *Zahnradbahn,* the rack and pinion railway, and at the Grinzing station they had got off and had gone to Berger's Restaurant and they had taken a table in the open. The May wine was in and he had ordered a carafe and he had lifted his glass to her. It was a dear face and he remembered it so well, from when he had seen it on that first New Year's Day.

"Mariska," he had said.

"Yes, Sigmund."

"My dearest Mariska."

She had reached across the table and had touched his cheek. "Finish your wine. Let's go higher."

It was twilight when they had left the restaurant and as they walked away they could hear the music through the trees. They had boarded the little *Zahnradbahn* again and had ridden the rest of the way up Kahlenberg, almost fifteen hundred feet above the city and they sat down there and looked down at Vienna

and the glittering water which now, in the almost-darkness, was not brown or muddy but could almost be thought of as blue; dark-blue, but blue.

"I think each time of the year is the most beautiful in Vienna," he said. "But of all the beautiful times I believe it is most beautiful in May."

"It is because you are leaving it in May."

"Perhaps."

She laughed, half-mockingly. "You have not yet gone and you are sentimental for Vienna already. How will it be when there are thousands of miles of land and water between you?"

He lit a cigarette. "I shall probably take the first boat back. When I return I shall never be able to leave here again." He looked around. "How beautiful it is here. We are lucky people."

"And it will never be this way to you again, Sigmund."

"What do you mean?"

"Something will happen to you. When you return, if you return—" she put her hand over his mouth. "Yes, my darling, I say if you ever return—you will be changed. I will be changed, too. The minute we part we both shall start to grow away from each other. That is the way it has to be. This can never be this way again."

"It will be better." He took her face between his hands. "How beautiful you are, Mariska. It will be bad without you."

"I think you will remember me just as far as my face can be seen from the train."

"I shall see your face wherever I am." He kissed her. "And next May, at this time, we shall be here again. And I will tell you fairy tales from other worlds."

"Wherever you are next May you will not forget this moment and this place," she said. "It's getting chilly," she said suddenly. She shivered slightly. "Look around you and then let us go down."

VIII

He counted twelve pencils, fixed them into a neat bundle, wrapped a piece of paper around them, moistened the dried glue along one edge of the paper, and then sealed it, pressing it for a moment until it held. He looked at the twelve pencils, unsharpened at one end, pink-erasered at the other. He put the pack to one side, where others were stacked, picked up twelve more pencils and went through the same routine. It was only ten o'clock in the morning and he had already packed twenty-two dozen pencils and before lunchtime he would pack fifty dozen more and before the day was out only God knew how many hundred dozen he would have packed.

He listened to the unfamiliar language spoken around him and to the sounds from the outside. The strangest sound of all was the clattering of the elevated line, the 'EL' as the people in New York called it. That crazy railroad with the tracks up in the air sneaked in and out of streets alongside the windows of apartment houses, and a person riding on it could see into half the apartments in New York. He often wondered how people must feel living like goldfish that way.

He still didn't know quite how it all had happened. Here he was, Sigmund Romberg, age twenty-two, pianist, violinist, pupil of

Victor Heuberger, reserve officer in the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Army, relative to Baron Gutmann of Vienna, and now working in a pencil factory on 14th Street in New York City. It had happened quite simply, and logically too, but it still was a mystery.

From Vienna he had gone directly to London where he had been entertained lavishly by the English agents for the Gutmann interests. After two weeks in London passage was booked for him to New York. Already dismayed by the difficulties of the English language, he pleaded for the agents to get him a passage on a German boat, but they had insisted that the more English he used the better he would speak it and there was no answer to that.

He had arrived in New York on a White Star liner with exactly $300 in his pockets and the address of a cousin of his mother's in the Bronx, which, in 1909, was something of a wilderness. With the $300 and free board at the relative's, he felt quite comfortably well off, and he began his investigations of Manhattan.

He found it a place a young Viennese could understand perfectly. There was no Cafe de l'Europe, no Schrangl's, no Lebmann's, no Cafe Sacher. But there were Churchill's, Shanley's, Rector's, Reisenweber's, Delmonico's, Sherry's, Luchow's, and dozens of others. Of course, a $300 bankroll did not permit extensive dining in any of these places, but one could always look in, and in most one could go to the bar and drink in not only beer but the atmosphere as well.

There was an American custom that appealed to him very much. He could enter any first-class beer hall around noontime, spend a nickel on a glass of beer, and then enjoy not only the beer but a free lunch and an hour of pleasant company. There were no free-lunch counters in Vienna; it was a local New York custom of which he approved heartily.

He had wandered around, filling himself with the city, as he had sought to enfold other cities, Osiek, Pecs, Szeged, Vienna.

He rode through Manhattan in the open streetcars in that summer of 1909 when the changeover from horses to electric vehicles was being made. He saw more automobiles in one day than he had seen in all the time he had spent in Vienna. He was drawn automatically to the theatrical section of Broadway, which, then, was centered between 32nd Street and 42nd Street. There were one or two theatres as far up as 46th Street, but beyond that there was nothing. But in the ten blocks the district was crowded with theatres, showing plays, musicals, vaudeville, and burlesque.

He wrote to Ernoe that New York would appeal to him. With Tammany Hall in full control, it was a wide-open town, and almost every other saloon had a full-size gambling establishment in the rear.

He wandered along the waterfronts of both rivers, and standing on the Hudson side he watched ferryboats crossing forth and back from New Jersey. There were two bridges across the East River then, and they were the largest bridges he had ever seen. If there had been any iota of engineering blood in him, he thought, the sight of those bridges would have stirred it. He rode on the IRT which started at City Hall and ended at 135th Street, and he made trips up and down the slender island on the elevated lines which roared along in the building canyons of Second, Third, Sixth and Ninth Avenues.

He watched fire engines, pulled by enormous horses, racing to conflagrations, and he asked questions by the score painfully of policemen in long blue coats and white helmets. He quickly found there were a couple of familiar places in the strange land: Hungarian restaurants on Second Avenue between Houston and 14th Streets, with music and language he understood, and serviced usually by waiters who too were old habitues of Vienna. One day he discovered there was a place called Yorkville, around 86th Street on the East Side, and that *there* was a little Germany.

He wrote long letters of all these things, to his parents, to

Mariska, to Ernoe, repeating again and again with wonderment how, in this one small island, in this one little part of the United States, there was compressed the whole of Europe, how one could simply decide where he wanted to go and then on a streetcar or subway or elevated be there in minutes: be where only German was spoken, or Italian, French, or Hungarian.

He wrote to his father: "What astonishes me more than anything else is how all these different peoples, with different backgrounds, religions, traditions, and so on, seem to get along with each other. In our country we too have a potpourri of racial groups, but they are always fighting and squabbling and until I got to New York I thought that could only be natural when alien peoples got together. Here, however, it seems to be different. Germans and Czechs, Hungarians and Italians, Jews and Irish live side by side. If it can be done here why can't it be done elsewhere?"

In his reply his father had indicated his satisfaction at his son's having the good sense to understand these things, but also expressed the fear that the potency of the new country might delay his return home. Sigmund replied this would not happen; but the end of the summer saw the end of the $300. He found himself too proud to ask his father for more money and looked around for a job. In a few days he found one, in a pencil factory. It appeared that with school opening there was a great demand for pencils, and so there he was, wrapping bundles of pencils, twelve in a bundle, for seven dollars a week. He also was given the privilege of returning in the evening to work overtime, so necessary to the education of the school children in New York were these pencils.

The days stretched out with infinite boredom, and New York took on another face entirely. For him the city of pleasure vanished. Now he wrapped pencils all morning, ate a quick lunch, wrapped pencils all afternoon, ate a quick dinner, wrapped pencils all evening, and then took a long ride back to the Bronx. He

kept telling himself that any day now he would write to his father, have some money sent over, and then take the next boat home. But he kept putting it off.

One afternoon in his third week at the pencil factory, he discovered that he was working not far from Second Avenue, and he recalled from his days of affluence (when he had $300, more than six months' pay at the current rate) that Second Avenue was filled with Hungarian restaurants. It was one of those long endless afternoons when he could see his life stretching ahead of him, years filled with pencils; when his afternoon's work was done he decided that he would, that evening at least, have a good oldfashioned meal before returning to his overtime session.

The first restaurant he came to on Second Avenue was the Cafe Continental. That was a reassuring name. All cities in all countries have a Cafe Continental and they are all the same, whether they are in Vienna or London, Paris or New York. With the air of a man who has found a lost friend, he walked down the four steps leading into the place and in a moment he knew he was home. On a little dais in the far end of the room was a fiddle player and a pianist and they were playing, of course, gypsy music. He looked around, breathing deeply. At the waiters in their black tuxedos, with little napkins over their arms; at the tables with candles, bottles of wine, stacks of rye bread; at the head waiter, bustling up, bowing, scraping, inquiring, "A table for one?" He wanted to sob in his pleasure. It was so familiar. If he looked hard enough he might see Mariska, waiting for him at one of the tables, or the laughing features of his friend Ernoe. Karczag could be somewhere around and maybe Lehar, whose show had turned out to be such a magnificent success after all, despite what Karczag had said about it.

He permitted himself to be led to a table and he accepted a menu, but first he ordered some wine, and he sipped the wine and closed his eyes and he thought back to the opening night of

Lehar's show. The court censor had finally approved it, it seems that the Emperor wanted to needle Montenegro a little bit at that time, and Karczag had reluctantly agreed to produce it. Sigmund had been backstage with Lehar on opening night and he remembered how unhappy the composer was. Karczag had thought so little of 'The Merry Widow' that he had not even bothered to get new costumes or scenery for it, using what he had in stock. It was not until three weeks after opening that Karczag first began to realize what a masterpiece he had on his hands and then, and for the first time, he bought new costumes and scenery.

How far away that was, and yet, seated here, with his eyes half-closed, listening to the music, it was not so far away. At any moment Captain Jellicheck might step down those stairs. Or Corporal Szabados. Reserve Officer Szabados. Where would he be now? Back in Budapest, pleading his cases in musty courtrooms?

He looked at the menu. The food was listed in two columns. One side was Hungarian, the other English. He had worked hard on his new language and he spoke it tolerably well and he had made it a point to use it at all times, but this evening he relaxed, and he carefully folded the cardboard so that only the Hungarian section faced him. He started to talk Hungarian to the waiter, and, sipping some of the excellent tokay he had ordered, he discussed the food on the menu.

One thing was not quite right. The music. The violinist was excellent. The pianist was bad. It was not that he played any wrong notes; it was that he played the right notes in a wrong manner. He had no feeling for the music at all, and gypsy music played without feeling is hogwash.

He finished a long and good meal and when it was over he ordered brandy. He asked the waiter who the violinist was. The waiter said his name was Rozsa Sandor. He asked the waiter if he would ask Mr. Sandor if he would be good enough to join him in a brandy at the next break. Presently the violinist was at the

table. Sigmund held out his hand. "Sit down, Mr. Sandor," he said in Hungarian. "I am told you are Hungarian too. My name is Sigmund Romberg and I have recently arrived from Vienna."

Sandor bowed low. Then he sat down and directed a barrage of questions at his host. For half an hour Sigmund told him everything he could about Vienna, and somehow, in the course of the conversation, happened to mention he was a musician.

Sandor nodded. "Yes, my friend, everyone from Vienna is a musician. But if only you were a pianist."

"I am a pianist," Sigmund said.

Sandor raised his eyebrows. "And what do you think of my pianist?"

Sigmund said nothing.

"You are right," Sandor said. "He is terrible. He is a Pole. Can you imagine a Pole trying to play Viennese music? Besides, he demands half of the tips. Fifty per cent, mind you. And it is obvious that I am the virtuoso."

"Quite obvious," Sigmund said.

"Gypsy music from a Pole," Sandor muttered. "*And* half the tips." He looked up as though struck with an idea. "Listen, my friend, come back here tonight. Come back after one o'clock when this noisemaker will have gone home. Play for me. If you play well, come and work for me. I think we will get along."

"Fifty per cent of the tips," Sigmund said. "Outrageous!"

He wrapped pencils until midnight and then he returned to the Cafe Continental. At one o'clock, after watching the clock for half an hour, the pianist stood up abruptly and walked off the stage. A few minutes later Sigmund sat down to the piano. He crashed into the Second Hungarian Rhapsody. When he finished he had broken the piano stool and three strings on the ancient piano. But he had a new job, at $15 a week, plus two meals a day, Hungarian meals, plus twenty-five per cent of the tips.

The following Monday he left the pencil factory, received as

a bonus a bundle of pencils, and that evening began to work at the Cafe Continental.

2.

A few days later, at one o'clock in the morning, as Sandor prepared to put his fiddle into its case, Sigmund said to him, "Why do we always stop at one o'clock?"

"Everyone stops at one o'clock. On Second Avenue every orchestra stops playing at one o'clock."

"I know. But why? Is there a law?"

Sandor scratched his head. "It's just custom, I guess," he said finally.

"What do you think of the idea of playing later than one o'clock if there are customers who want to listen? You know, Rozsa, people get very sentimental in the early hours of the morning, and sentimentality means heavy tipping."

Sandor nodded. "I'll speak to the boss," he said.

The boss thought it was an excellent idea, so the following night the music continued on beyond one o'clock. It was a great success with the customers, and, as Sigmund had suggested, the tips that came in during the small hours of the morning reflected the amount of wine the customers had consumed until then. However, Sigmund had had another idea entirely when he made the suggestion. He had known that it was customary for all music to cease at one o'clock, and he had thought that if the Cafe Continental would provide music after that hour the first persons to be attracted there would be other musicians. From his own experience in Vienna he knew there was nothing a musician liked better in his off-hours than to go somewhere and listen to other musicians work. And if he were going to pursue a musical career in New York, Sigmund wanted to know other musicians.

At the end of his first week in the Cafe Continental, the leader

of the orchestra in the huge Pabst-Harlem Restaurant on West 125th Street, Joska Fejer, approached him when he finished his work and offered him a job, paying $25 a week, plus one free meal. Sigmund accepted.

At the Pabst-Harlem, an establishment which could seat three thousand persons, Sigmund was quite happy. The orchestra comprised three violins, a cello, bass, flute, piano, drum, and harmonium, and it was this last instrument that immediately attracted his attention, particularly when he ascertained that the pay rate for a harmonium player was higher than that for a piano player.

The harmonium was on the order of a small organ, and was able to give reasonably good imitations of the sounds of the clarinet, trumpet, trombone, brass choir, or woodwind choir, and, played with the orchestra, gave the unit a great depth. It was an instrument born in Vienna and Sigmund had a little experience with it. Now he applied himself and within six months he had the job of harmonium player at $30 a week. What gave him the greatest satisfaction in playing the harmonium was this: as a somewhat obscure instrument there were few printed scores for it and it was up to the player to make his own arrangements.

The hours at the Pabst-Harlem were long but rewarding. On Sundays five of the musicians, including the harmonium player, entertained from noon to three o'clock; at three the full orchestra was assembled and played until six. After an hour's rest and dinner, the orchestra played again until one o'clock in the morning.

Soon after taking over the harmonium his salary was raised to $45 a week and there were other considerations. Song-plugging was just beginning to become an industry. Music publishers and song writers dropped into the restaurant and brought their new songs, appealing for plugs. They supplied orchestra-

tions and even singers to help popularize their music. They also directed a steady stream of gifts to key players in the orchestra, and there was no one, apart from the leader of the band, who was in a better spot than the harmonium player.

On a warm spring evening a thin, dark-faced youth appeared with some music. He said he had written the music and if they would play it he would be glad to sing it. He held out his hand to the orchestra leader. "My name is Berlin," he said. "This is a new kind of music. It has a different rhythm. I'll sing it for you. I've called it 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' "

3.

As the weeks passed it was as though he had never had any other life. It was as though he had always played in an orchestra in New York, had never lived anywhere but in New York. It was almost as a shock that he received a letter from his father pointing out that the year was ended, and asking him when he planned to return to Vienna. As he read the letter, which seemed to come from another world entirely, it became apparent to him that, almost without his knowing it, he had already rejected the idea of returning home.

He did not want to go back. There were many reasons for it, and the reasons were not entirely clear to him; he could not explain them to his father. Within the short space of a year he had worked out a small success for himself. He was earning good pay and he was working at something he loved. His playing was improving all the time and his orchestrations, based on the solid background furnished by his studies with Heuberger, were becoming more and more successful. He had made new friends, almost all of them musicians. And he regarded New York as his home. This last was the strangest thing of all.

New York had won him. It was his city now as it was the private

city for everyone who was happy in it. It was unthinkable now to live anywhere other than New York. It was difficult to explain, even to himself. He had adored Vienna, and in its memory the fabulous city was taking on the color of a dream. But it was a dream that had passed.

There was another thing and it was so new that he scarcely knew what to make of it. He had found himself, in the last few months, with more and more of a desire to *compose* music and that was something he had never seriously considered before, never, in all the years in Europe when he had dreamed of and planned for a musical career. It was always with the idea of *playing* an instrument, or at the most, leading an orchestra. But now he thought of writing the music himself, and the new country had given him that and he knew it. It was a desire that had been nurtured in new earth and it belonged to where he was now and not to what he left behind.

From time to time he remained in the restaurant after it was closed, and while cleaning women worked and dishes were washed in the kitchen he tinkered with the notes on the piano and fashioned music. Some of these compositions he orchestrated later and gave them to the boys in the orchestra to play. They were nameless songs, usually waltzes, and as he listened to them played by the orchestra he found his mistakes and then corrected them.

Writing the music answered some need. He found himself compelled to write, even though the conditions which existed at that time discouraged budding song writers. Contracts given to popular composers were so bad that only a chosen few could earn a living by music; song writers were required to go to popular restaurants and sing their own songs. A successful musician in an orchestra was hardly attracted to this field since he had a higher income and greater security as a player than he could possibly hope to achieve as a composer.

Perhaps it was the very fact that he was away from his home that caused stray themes and melodies which typified that home to course endlessly through his mind. Undoubtedly it was some need to re-create the sounds of his childhood, to keep green the memory of everything that was associated with his family, his old friends, with Mariska. And undoubtedly too there was something in the spirit of this new land which lent itself to such things.

For daily he was overwhelmed with the freedom he found around him. Only now, with a year of New York behind him, could he realize how, with all its glamour and all its beauty, that the life in the Empire was restricted, caste-ridden, and almost medieval. It was sugarcoated, but under the coating there was an unyielding regimentation. In New York, by comparison, the freedom was something to become intoxicated with.

He did not know which of these things, or perhaps it was all of them, affected him more. Perhaps Vienna was made only to be remembered. Now he was breathing fresh air and somehow, with everything lovely that he remembered of it, the air in Vienna was stale.

He wrote a long letter to his father, a stumbling and confused letter, in which he went no further than to say he wanted to remain in New York a little longer. He did not dare tell him, did not dare tell himself, that perhaps he had resolved to remain in this new country permanently. Somewhere in the letter, in an incidental way, he mentioned that he had felt inspired to write music. He mentioned it most casually, and was amazed to receive, almost in the return mail, another letter from his father.

"Your marvelous news about wanting to compose music came as a great excitement to your mother and me," Adam Romberg wrote. "It was against your becoming a professional musician in the sense of a pianist or violinist in a restaurant or theatre that we struggled. To be a composer is quite another thing. It is something I approve of with all my heart. Your mother is not quite

convinced and she still holds to her old plan that soon you will return, unchanged from the boy who left here more than a year ago, and resume your schooling. Perhaps I am more of the world than she is, or perhaps it is just that I understand you better. What you are trying to say, my son, is that you have found a new life and that you want to live it your own way.

"Anyone can scrape a fiddle or bang on a piano, even your father, as you know. But those who are given the gift of *creating* music are a people apart. It would be a sin for your mother or for me to attempt to stifle this urge in you, or to order you to depart from where this inspiration has arisen. If you feel that you can create music and that you must remain where you are to do so, remain there with our blessing. Our home is always your home and we are always ready to help in any way that you may need help. But for yourself, do what you feel you must do.

"And when your first piece of music is published, send me a copy so that in the evening I can play it for your mother. I am sure that a single work of this kind will make up for her heartache at not seeing you. We are in good health. Business is excellent. Life goes on quietly, as always. And we miss you more than we can say. God bless you and keep you."

Mariska was a realist. She seemed not at all surprised at his extending his stay in the United States. Her letters were warm and open, but there was a kind of acceptance in them. Mariska came from an old stock in an old land and she knew how to receive what she regarded as inevitable.

In that spring he received a letter from her in which she made it plain that she did not expect him to return, not soon anyway. And in this letter she permitted herself more emotion than she had before. "The other evening I went up to Kahlenberg," she wrote. "You have surely forgotten the day but it was exactly a year ago that evening that we went there together. Why did I go there? I

do not know myself. Perhaps it was just a gesture to a lovely memory. I stood alone in the same place where we stood together and I looked down upon the city and I wondered whether you remembered that other evening in May.

"Things proceed along their destined way. I shall be waiting here if you return and we can be to each other whatever we can. But let us not still talk and make plans the way we did when we were romantic children. Things are happening to you and they are quite apart from me and my life and things are happening to me as well. I shall always want to see you and your return here would be wonderful, but understand that it can never be as it was between us, because we have gone along too far without each other. Neither of us, Sigmund, was meant to remain alone."

He walked through the streets of Manhattan that morning, clutching the letter in his hand. And finally when he did not make immediate plans to return he knew that he would not return and that something had ended and was gone.

4.

The June sun was a weight on the city. Outside the Federal Building traffic clattered. He sat in the long office and studied the form in front of him. A fly buzzed near his head. He brushed it off, sighed, and started in on the top of the page again. There were so many questions asked of those who wanted to become citizens of the United States.

A clerk, with easy familiarity, had offered to help. Sigmund, after remarking how different the informal American officialdom was from the German counterpart—the clerk would be a Herr Doktor, at least, and would not be working in his shirtsleeves, no matter how hot the day, but would be wearing a black alpaca jacket, and to obtain assistance from him would be a major opera-

tion—, thanked the clerk and said that he thought he understood English well enough to figure it out by himself.

"Okay, fellow," the clerk said, grinning. "If you run into trouble, yell."

"Thank you," Sigmund said.

He had taken the form with its endless stream of questions and had chosen a desk in a corner, and before he began to study the questionnaire he stared ahead of him for a little while, considering what he was doing, listening to the traffic, hearing the buzzing of the flies. He looked around at the other men who were also taking the same step he was. There was a large man, his black hair a wild forest on his head, streams of perspiration rolling down his cheeks. Painfully he attempted to understand the questions before him. Every few moments he rose from his seat, waddled his great bulk to one of the clerks, and asked with a heavy Italian accent what this or that question meant.

The clerk's response was always the same. "Let's have a look, Tony." Then the explanation, spoken slowly and carefully, Tony nodding vehemently as comprehension burst upon him. Once the clerk could not convey the meaning to the man and he asked him to wait; he left his booth and returned a few moments later with another man. The newcomer immediately started a lengthy conversation in Italian, and at the sound of his own language the applicant broke into a sunshine of smiles and after shouting back and forth returned to his seat, his face beaming.

Sigmund looked around the room. There were faces he was certain he could identify. That man with the light hair and high coloring and square features was a Pole. He would bet on that rigid face. There were several other Italians and also a man and woman talking softly to one another and Sigmund could discern a Croatian word now and then.

As he sat there, thinking, seeing, listening, it occurred to him that these same persons, all of them, Italians, Poles, Croats, Jews,

might have been similarly gathered in some impressive chamber of officialdom in Vienna. They would be seated at the same kind of immense impersonal tables and desk, poring over long forms, filled with questions. If necessary there would be interpreters handy. It was all very much as it could be in Vienna, with one difference.

In Vienna, when each person left the official offices, he would, instantly, before his feet led him to the streets outside, resume his own identity. The Croat, for a moment in touching Imperial bureaucracy, would become more of a Croat than he ever was before as soon as he quitted the contact. The Pole, the Italian, the Slav, would fly back immediately with a spiritual and instinctive impulse to his own. In a thousand years the Empire had not lessened one iota the nationalistic, racial, or religious loyalties of any of the numerous peoples in it. Never was there anything more than just an uneasy and temporary truce among the opposing sections.

But somehow, in this new country, there was an alchemy at work. From some place, from some place to which no man could point, there was mystery at work so that the moment a person set foot in it new forces began to churn within him and something of the newness became part of him. It was as though the United States were a huge plant, huge enough to take all the grafts made on it; and grafted onto this new living plant the alien additions took a life of their own, taking from the plant and giving to it too. It was a third dimension that was achieved, he thought. It was not that the foreigners lost their racial personality when they became Americans. Nor did they retain them as before. But somehow they reached a new dimension, in which the elements of both sides were fused, and a new element achieved.

With failures that were apparent, still, he thought, more had been achieved here than anywhere else, and he was peculiarly fitted to observe and understand the miracle, coming as he did

from the greatest hodge-podge in Europe. After three years in New York it still awed him to think that millions of persons, from everywhere in the world, were able to live and work together without an army on hand to keep them from riot.

The decision for him, personally, had been long in coming, even though now, seated there, the form in his hand, he thought he must have known it long before. He had no desire now to return to his home except as a visitor. For a long while now he found himself regarding Vienna, once to him the most spectacular city in the world, almost as a costume piece, oldfashioned in an undeniably lovely way, but spiritually constricted and small. Who would have thought that he ever could have outgrown Vienna! Still, knowing that, he had delayed making a decision because he could not bring himself to making a final cleavage with everything that was close and dear to him in his world. He was twenty-five and his roots were far away and it was difficult to sever his connections with them.

Before he could bring himself to make formal application for citizenship in the United States, he had written at great length to his parents, seeking to straighten out his thoughts by explaining to them. In his father's answer he could see the shock; it was a shock that was tempered with acceptance, as though his father, with some wisdom that was beyond his own, had expected just that. It was this letter, perhaps more than anything else, that had hardened his resolution. Reading the letter he was aware that he was reading something from a foreign land. Where he was now was home.

And now now he began to answer the list of questions, one by one. Name . . . age . . . place of birth. . . .

IX

ANDRE BUSTANOBY'S lean bony face reflected his amazement. "Dance music! In my establishment? Nothing of the kind. Ladies and gentlemen who dine here would never be seen dancing in public, making exhibitions of themselves."

Sigmund held his ground. "People like to dance," he persisted. "I know this. They like to dance especially after a good dinner and wine. If we played music for them they would stay on and dance and drink more wine."

Bustanoby shook his head. "You know perfectly well the type of diner we cater to, Romberg. Your music has been not displeasing to them. But such persons would consider it undignified to dance in public. That might do for some of the places in New York but certainly not for here."

Sigmund shrugged. "I think you are mistaken, Mr. Bustanoby. It is your restaurant of course and I only work for you but I think you are mistaken." His face became eager. "Please, listen to me. The ladies and gentlemen might feel strange at first. I'll agree to that. But I have thought this out very carefully. My idea is to hire three or four couples. Have them dress in evening

clothes so no one would know they were not regular customers. When the dance music started they would rise and begin to dance. Others would follow, sooner or later. I am certain of that."

Bustanoby rolled a long cigar in his mouth. "Sit down, Romberg," he said. He studied the young man for a while. "You have given this some thought," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"And you think your plan would work out successfully?"

"I'm sure of it," Sigmund said vehemently.

Bustanoby looked at him keenly. "Sure enough to gamble your job?"

"What do you mean, Mr. Bustanoby?"

"If I were to agree to allow you to make this experiment and my customers refused to take part in this public demonstration I would have to make some gesture of apology. I would have to have a scapegoat. Would you be willing to risk losing your job to try out this crazy idea of yours?"

Sigmund thought rapidly. Then he said impetuously, "Give me a month. If your customers are not dancing happily to my music after a month's time I will resign."

Bustanoby compressed his lips. "All right. You have my permission." He nipped the end of the cigar with a gold clipper. His eyes never left the young man. "For your sake I hope your experiment succeeds. Your music has not been at all bad."

"Thank you, sir," Sigmund said. He left the office and walked through the restaurant to the raised platform where his orchestra played. He sat down before the piano and began to ramble up and down the keys. He had to think and thinking behind music was easiest. The problems never seemed to be so insurmountable behind music. And he had a problem now. He had more than he had bargained for.

It was the fall of 1912, several months after he had applied for citizenship, and he now was conductor of his own orchestra in

Bustanoby's Restaurant, on 39th Street off Broadway. That summer he had joined the Musicians' Union and then, one by one, selected men to work with him. In the fall he was offered the job at Bustanoby's and, against the advice of all his friends, accepted.

The restaurant was one of the city's legendary dining places. Owned by two brothers, Jack and Andre Bustanoby, it catered only to the most fashionable clientele and evening dress was mandatory. The restaurant was small, as restaurants went, but it was considered the ultimate in a kind of elegance that even then was passing out. Its food was famous everywhere and it boasted one of the greatest wine cellars in the city. It also was regarded as a graveyard for orchestras.

Romberg was warned that no orchestra ever lasted there for more than two months. The two brothers were so unyielding in their demands and set their standards so high, it was said no music could ever satisfy them. Sigmund, with his first orchestra complete, was so eager to get started somewhere that he ignored the warnings and took the job.

The first week or two went along quietly enough. Sigmund had trained his men well, in his own manner, and they played light concert music in the Viennese style and in good taste. The brothers seemed neither dissatisfied nor enthusiastic and after a while Sigmund began to feel a mounting disappointment. He had felt, somehow, that when he started with his own orchestra something big was going to happen. He had not known exactly what, but whatever it was it was to have been something more electric than just playing for indifferent bosses and people interested mainly in good food.

One evening a waiter deposited a card on his piano. The card bore the name 'Alexander Roberts,' and the waiter pointed to the man who sent it. "He asked for you to have a glass of champagne when you are free," the waiter said. Romberg nodded.

At the next break he went to the table. Roberts was a distinguished, white-haired man and he was seated at the table with an attractive girl. He introduced the girl as his daughter, Ann. "We have enjoyed your music so much, Mr. Romberg," Roberts said. "My daughter and I traveled in Vienna last year and this kind of music brings back such lovely memories."

"I'm studying the piano, Mr. Romberg," the girl said. "It's thrilling to listen to you play those beautiful waltzes."

"Good," Sigmund said. "Why don't you come back to the piano with me and watch me?"

"Could I?" She clasped her hands. "I would love to."

She walked back with him when his rest period ended and stood at the piano for almost an hour. She returned with her father the following evening and again visited with him. After the third visit he asked her to dine with him on his next night off.

He called for her at her home on Riverside Drive and they went to the theatre and then to a restaurant for supper. It was an excellent restaurant, a gayer place than Bustanoby's. The thing that struck Sigmund most forcibly was that couples from among the diners danced when they finished with their meals. "It seems strange to see public dancing in a place like this," he said. "I seem to associate that with—well, you know, less respectable places."

"It's not usual," Ann agreed.

"Would you care to dance?" he asked. "Do you think it would be all right?"

She laughed, showing a dimple. "Of course, silly."

"I don't know," he said. "I'm just a boy from Vienna."

They rose and went onto the floor and she slipped easily and gracefully into his arms. The orchestra was playing a waltz and they glided around the floor. When they sat down again her eyes

were sparkling and her face was flushed. "Oh," she said excitedly, "I do love to dance."

"We'll have some more wine and dance again," he said.

He looked around the room. Most of the women seemed to have the same excitement that had captured the girl. It was the dancing, all right. It brought the people together. He thought of the quiet, staid atmosphere in Bustanoby's. Here the people became part of the music and the music part of the people. The orchestra was not just something that was there—supplying music. It was a part of the whole conception of the evening's pleasure.

On the way home, he said, "You know, Ann, I wonder how it would be if there were dancing at Bustanoby's."

She laughed. "There? No. Not if I know the Bustanoby brothers. They think of their place as something sacred."

"That's just it. Something sacred. Perhaps that's what's the matter with it. Dining is an art—I know that. I love good food. But it is not a solemn art. How can it hurt the food if the people are made happy afterward? Do you remember those faces tonight? How happy the women were! Dancing does that. To eat well and to drink fine wine and then to hold a lovely girl in your arms." His eyes glittered. "Ann, I think I found out something tonight. I know that it probably will cause an explosion, but I'm going to speak to Andre tomorrow and ask him to allow dancing in his restaurant."

He broached the idea the next day.

It was a week later when he informed the brothers he was ready to go ahead. Ann and her father had come to the restaurant once during that time and he had confided his plans to her. She told him that she had begged her father to dance with her when the time came but that Roberts had thought it wholly undignified for a restaurant of Bustanoby's class.

"That's what scares me to death," Sigmund said. "Your father would think nothing of dancing in a less elite place but he thinks it's too racy for Bustanoby's. If everybody else thinks that I'm sunk."

"I'll work on him," she promised.

"Just let me see that dimple," he said. Then, "Good. Now I'm ready for anything!"

In different places in the restaurant Sigmund had posted four couples on the first night of the experiment. He had selected them with care. Two of the couples were rather elderly. The other two were younger. All four men and women were dressed impeccably.

Seated at the piano that evening he studied the diners. One moment he was certain he was going to win his gamble; those goodnatured persons enjoying such good food and wine would surely rise to the musical bait. Looking at their dignified and aloof faces a moment later he was equally certain they would not. They might even raise their well-bred faces in horror and walk out. He felt a little trickle of cold sweat down his back. In a corner, a lean and quizzical judge, Andre stood, waiting.

Then the time finally arrived. Romberg cast his eyes to the four parts of the room where the hired couples were waiting. He lifted his eyes to heaven for a moment and then he and his orchestra began a Boston waltz. He waited for a few moments and then glanced at the floor. There were four couples dancing gracefully. His hired four. No one else. He finished the waltz and turned to the audience. The four couples, as instructed, applauded politely. No one else applauded. He glanced over the room. He saw nothing but surprise and expressions of incredulity.

He shook slightly as he turned back to the piano and burst into a lively turkey trot. When it was finished there were still just the four couples on the floor. He played for one hour, mixing waltzes,

turkey trots, and when he was through no couple from among the regular diners had joined the dancers on the floor.

He left the platform, his head somewhat bowed. Of course, his worst fear had not been realized: no one had walked out. As he passed through the diners he was gratified to see a few smiles here and there and what he liked to think were encouraging nods. Perhaps he had just hoped for too much too quickly.

He passed Bustanoby. "You can still forget about this, eh, Romberg? We can pass it off as professional entertainment."

"I asked for a month, Mr. Bustanoby," Sigmund said.

Bustanoby, puffing a cigar, shrugged. "All right, my young friend. Have it your way."

The second night, the third night, the first week, it was the same. The diners looked at the four couples with interest and increasing pleasure, but made no attempt to join them. It was as though they merely regarded the dancers as a professional act. Sigmund, watching anxiously night after night, felt something more was necessary to break the ice. He could sense, he was sure, that the people would *like* to get up and dance. He could feel definitely that there was a more informal atmosphere in the room; people were laughing more, enjoying themselves more openly. He wondered what would happen if he just asked them, point-blank, to join in the dancing. He didn't dare.

Then he had another idea. He decided that it was because the same four couples appeared each night that the customers didn't realize they were expected to join them. The same four couples, rising at the same time each evening, going on the floor together, just as though they *were* a professional act.

Without saying a word to Andre, he engaged another couple. He told them not to go on the floor with the others, but to wait until the first dance was over and then to get up and join them during the second dance, *after* the second dance started. That

evening he prayed a small prayer, and then started the dance music again. The first number over, he launched into the second. His new couple, seated at a table near the dance floor, acted their parts perfectly. The man leaned forward and whispered to the girl. She nodded, after a moment. Then he rose, and before the startled eyes of the other diners, he escorted her to the center of the floor and started to dance with her.

Now was the moment. Either others would follow or else the whole thing was a failure. He played on. He thought he heard a chair scraping. He turned. The dancers passed before his eyes. He recognized them all, the four original couples and the fifth couple he had hired. And then he saw another couple. He turned again. There were several new couples. And as he watched others were walking between the tables in the direction of the dance floor. And then he saw that one of the couples was Ann and her father. She waved to him.

He felt a little weak in the knees. He played on, alternating waltzes with the popular turkey trots, and when the session was ended there were at least a score of couples on the floor. And as he bowed and strode from the platform the applause was more than perfunctory. As he passed Andre he asked, "Well?"

"Your month is not up yet," his boss said noncommittally.

At the end of the month, however, Andre admitted that the fad was apparently taking on. By the end of the second month no one thought there was anything strange about it, and the brothers were delighted to find their old customers now spent an entire evening at the restaurant, dining as usual, and then dancing afterward. It was not difficult for Sigmund to suggest another step: tea dancing, and when that proved successful, luncheon music.

By the end of six months Sigmund and his orchestra were playing, with only brief pauses for rest, from 12:30 in the afternoon until three o'clock in the morning. The brothers now were willing

to gamble on almost any idea he had, and when he suggested getting a Negro band for dancing after 11 o'clock at night, they agreed to that as well.

With this new orchestra on hand to relieve him, Sigmund proceeded to organize a trio which played concert music for private parties in the rooms on the second floor of the restaurant. He earned, by then, $150 a week, and was regarded by the brothers as a fixture at their restaurant.

2.

He finished his work and then had a light supper. It was after four in the morning when he mounted the stairs to his apartment. He opened the door and saw that one of the table lamps was lighted. He looked around and saw someone sleeping on a couch. Then the person turned sleepily, opened his eyes, and sat up. "Sigmund," he said.

"Hugo!" Sigmund rushed over to his brother and threw his arms around him. "Hugo, my God! When did you get here? Why didn't you let me know you were coming? Are you alone?"

Hugo grinned. "It was to be a surprise. I had a time talking your landlady into letting me in. Yes, I'm alone."

"Let me look at you!" He turned on other lights. "Hugo, Hugo, here in New York. Who would have ever thought it?"

"Blame your letters, Sigmund," his brother said. "Who could read all those enthusiastic letters you have been sending back home for the last few years without wanting to join you in this magic country?"

"And how are Mother and Father? Are they well? They didn't come with you? They're not hiding in the bedroom to surprise me too?" He looked at the bedroom door, half-expecting his parents to emerge.

"No," Hugo said. "There was some talk about them coming

with me for a visit, of course, but . . ." He shrugged his shoulders. "Father is old, you know, and he hates to change the routine of his living in any way. Yes, Sigmund, they are both well. They miss you, of course, and now they shall miss me."

"With you here to help me we ought to be able to persuade them to come to this country," Sigmund said.

"Perhaps."

The two brothers sat up the rest of the morning talking. It was daylight when Sigmund reluctantly made himself lie down for a rest. He awoke after a few hours and immediately began to ply his brother with additional questions. He could not get enough news from him. He asked for the most precise details, until Hugo threw up his hands and laughed, "You question me like a detective!"

"What of yourself? What do you plan to do here?" He studied his brother's face hungrily, seeing it in not only his features, but other faces as well. He was overjoyed to listen to the excellent English his brother spoke. Hugo, it appeared, had been graduated from a very good Hungarian commercial school and had studied the language there.

"I want to be successful, like you, Sigmund."

"Good. Can you play a fiddle? I'll hire you."

"No, I'm afraid all the musical talent in the family was concentrated in you. I have been studying public accounting. There is an excellent future in that. I think what I should do is take a post-graduate course in some good school here."

"Fine. Find out all about it. And meanwhile you live here."

"I don't want to intrude on you," Hugo said.

"What a thing to say. Now listen to me. Do you have evening clothes?"

"Yes."

"Good. Soon I have to go to work. You stay here and rest. Tonight at six o'clock you come to the restaurant." He squeezed his

brother's arms. "What a time we shall have! I know a lovely girl, Ann Roberts. I'll have her get a friend for you. I'll cut my work short and we'll do the town!"

The arrival of his brother, which happened to be followed by a particularly heavy flood of letters from home—from his father, from Ernoe, from Mariska, even a letter from his old commanding officer, who now was Major Jellicheck—crystallized a desire that had long been in his mind. He wanted to return home for a visit. He wanted to see his parents, see Belisce, Vienna, the places and people he knew. He wanted to see Mariska, Ernoe, old friends. It now was the fall of 1913 and he had been in New York for more than four years.

More than anything else he wanted to bring his parents back to the United States with him. He spoke at length about this to his brother and both men agreed that the parents might look favorably on a project to come to this country for a visit. Once here, Sigmund thought, it might be possible to induce them to stay permanently. With Hugo here with him he felt that his parents would have no valid reason to stay in Belisce.

There was some disquieting news in the letters from Ernoe and Major Jellicheck. Both men spoke of increasing tensions in the Balkans and the possibilities of war. This might have been even more disquieting if the Balkans were not always threatening war and, as a matter of fact, had just not gone through a couple of little wars. It was hard to take the Balkans seriously.

His plan, as it became definite, was to work as hard as he could through the winter and get together enough money to pay for a trip home in the grand manner. He wanted to make the return in style, for many reasons, not the least of which was the fact that so marked a sign of success might be the best argument he could advance to his parents. And, of course, he had a natural

desire to appear as flourishing as possible in the eyes of everyone.

His free day of the week was Sundays, and on that day he had been in the habit of going to the Irving Place Theatre, on 14th Street, where Gustav Amberg presented a repertory of German operettas. Sigmund brought Hugo to the theatre, enjoying his brother's astonishment at finding German operettas on the stage in New York.

In the months that he had gone to the theatre, Sigmund had become acquainted with Amberg, and one Sunday afternoon, when he brought his brother along, he took him around to the producer's office to meet him. He found Amberg in conversation with another man and started to leave the office. Amberg called him back. "Come here, Romy, you don't have to go. J. J. just dropped in for a minute and I want you to meet him anyway. J. J., this is Sigmund Romberg. He is in charge of the orchestra at Bustanoby's. He's the one who started that dance business there, you know. Romy, this is J. J. Shubert."

Sigmund shook Shubert's hand. Then he said, "This is my brother, Hugo, Mr. Amberg. Hugo has just arrived from Vienna."

"J. J., this boy Romberg has a lot of talent," Amberg said. "I've been wanting you two to know each other for a long time."

"If you work at Bustanoby's you are just a few doors away from our offices," Shubert said. "Drop in and see me when you get a chance."

On the way home Hugo looked at his brother curiously. "You seem to be walking on air," he said. "Who is J. J. Shubert?"

Sigmund laughed out loud. "That is a very good question, Hugo," he said. "And it deserves an answer. I will try to tell you just who J. J. Shubert is."

For many years the powerful theatrical firm of Klaw and Erlanger had controlled virtually all the New York Theatres and

bookings, and everything of any importance on the road. They had been undisputed rulers of the roost for so long that no one remembered when the monopoly had not existed. However, in recent years, their eminence had been challenged by a couple of brash young brothers named Jake and Lee Shubert, and after a long struggle it now appeared that the unthinkable was about to happen: the Shuberts were about to take the position of the leading producers on Broadway and were already regarded by many as the successors to Klaw and Erlanger.

This Sigmund explained to his brother. "If you hope some day to write music for shows, friendship with this Mr. J. J. Shubert is an invaluable thing, then," Hugo said.

"Hugo, my brother, you are so right!" Sigmund laughed.

"Well, he invited you up to his office."

"He did, didn't he," Sigmund murmured.

"When do you go up? Tomorrow?"

Sigmund shook his head slowly. "I think he was just being polite," he said.

3.

The dance craze was sweeping over New York. Everywhere more and more of the popular rhythmic music was being played. People seemed crazy to dance, anywhere, at any time, and when they were not themselves dancing they wanted to see professionals dance for them. The Cafe de Paris opened and a young couple named Vernon and Irene Castle appeared in a private club on the fifth floor. At Rector's another dance team, Maurice and Walton, entertained. And wherever these dance teams appeared, it seemed that their audiences couldn't wait for them to finish so that they could get up and dance themselves.

Orchestra leaders everywhere were bombarded with new dance tunes, and the publishers and their pluggers made the rounds of

the restaurants nightly, urging the conductors to play their music. As Sigmund studied the endless stream of tunes that poured in, simple ordinary things that seemed to leap into instant popularity, he became more and more convinced that he could write music at least as good as anything he was playing.

He finished a round of music one night and left the stage to take his rest. On the way out he was hailed by a music publisher named Joseph W. Stern. He sat down at Stern's table and lit a cigarette. "Romy, thanks a lot for playing those new tunes of mine. You made them sound wonderful," Stern said.

"Thanks."

"How do you like them?"

Sigmund shrugged. "Ordinary. Not good. Not bad. I could do better myself."

He was speaking half in jest and it amused him to see how annoyed the publisher became.

"You think so," Stern said. "Well, why don't you try it then, if you think it's so easy. Write some music and I'll publish it, if it's good enough."

"I might do that," Sigmund said easily, blowing out rings of smoke.

"I'll be waiting," Stern said. Then he remembered that Sigmund was, after all, a popular orchestra leader and one who mustn't be offended. "You did play my music beautifully," he said.

Presently Sigmund returned to his stand and began to play some more of the popular music. He had been joking, more or less, with Stern, but he listened carefully to the music he was playing, and the tunes seemed to him to be almost rudimentary. Anyone with half an ear for music and a tenth of the knowledge he had of orchestration and arrangement could write stuff like that. The odd thing was that he had never thought about writing dance music. He had thought for years of composing music, but

always in terms of music he had known in Vienna, soft, melodic ballads that could be sung, that had emotion. But this stuff!

He played on through the night and his thoughts turned to Shubert. He had never gone up to see Shubert. And for the same reason that he had not gone up, years before, to see Gruenfeld, in Vienna. He could not present himself that way.

At three o'clock in the morning the music ended and the men went home. He remained behind. There had been an irritating challenge in Stern's voice. He sat down to the piano and began to improvise. At eight o'clock in the morning he rose. He had completed three dance tunes.

He had breakfast and over his coffee studied the music he had written. Two of the pieces were one-steps, and he had called these 'Some Smoke' and, for no reason, 'Leg of Mutton.' The third tune was a Boston waltz and this he titled 'Le Poeme.' He finished his coffee and walked around to Stern's office. He tossed the manuscript across the desk. "You wanted some music," he said, casually. "Well, here are three little numbers I dashed off in my spare time."

He waved his hand and left the office and went home and fell into an exhausted sleep. He was awakened several hours later by a telephone call. Half-asleep, he stumbled to the telephone. "Yes, this is Romberg. Oh, hello, Stern. You do? Sure you can publish them." Still not fully awake he went back to bed and fell back on the pillow. Suddenly he opened his eyes and sat upright.

4.

Andre Bustanoby was having his second breakfast at a little table near a window. He motioned to Sigmund as he walked into the place. "Sit down, Romy," he said. "Have a cup of coffee." He pushed a newspaper aside and looked at his conductor. "How do you feel today?"

"Good. The same."

"I see your dance music is getting pretty popular around town."

"The boys seem to like it."

"One of our men made one of his regular tours last night seeing what the opposition was doing and he says he heard those three numbers of yours everywhere."

Sigmund grinned. "Good. That's music to *my* ears."

Bustanoby poured coffee into his cup. "What kind of a contract did Stern give you?"

Sigmund frowned. "Not a very good one. I guess I was a little too enthusiastic. I just signed what he put in front of me."

Bustanoby stirred his coffee. "And what does the paper say?"

"I give him an exclusive option on my output for God knows how long and all he does is agree to pay royalties on what he publishes."

"That's pretty one-sided, isn't it?" Bustanoby lit a cigar. "Always remember, Romy, that the slower you do things the faster they get done and the better they get done. Nothing ever was lost by taking a little time out for consideration."

Sigmund nodded. He sipped his coffee. "I guess you're right, Andre."

"You're just starting out and you have a genuine talent but you're entering a cutthroat world. Don't ever forget it. No one is going to watch out for you but yourself."

"I'm learning."

Bustanoby tapped the newspaper in front of him. "Have you been reading about this fight between the J. J. Shubert and Louis Hirsch?"

"I've heard something about it."

Bustanoby looked at the paper. "Hirsch is Shubert's staff composer, you know. They've had quite a falling out. *Variety* is full of it."

He handed the paper to Sigmund and watched him as he read the account of the quarrel. It was important theatrical news. The Shuberts had established a routine of putting on three revues annually, at the Winter Garden theatre. There was a fall show which opened some time in October and ran until the end of January; a spring show which followed on the heels of the winter show and lasted until some time in May, and a 'Passing Show' for the summer months. The Shuberts might have other shows on hand at the same time and usually did, but nothing interfered with the regular production of the three revues, which, together with the shows put on by Florenz Ziegfeld, were the most colorful and lavish productions on Broadway. The composer, Hirsch, had managed to supply a steady stream of music for these Shubert revues; since the shows were scheduled like clockwork, a defection on the part of the composer was a serious matter.

Sigmund put down the paper. "It looks as though Hirsch means business."

"J. J. will have to get himself another composer," Bustanoby said, fondling his cigar. "He might be thinking of a young man named Romberg."

"Me? Work for Shubert?" He laughed. "No, I think there are about a hundred men around town he would think of before the name Romberg would enter his head."

"Do you think so?"

"Someday, maybe." He got up. "I better get things going before the luncheon crowd comes in."

"Sit down," Bustanoby said. "Have another cup of coffee."

"I've had enough, thanks."

"I think Shubert is thinking about you right now," Bustanoby said.

"What makes you say that?"

"I've been wondering why he sent a messenger over here asking for you to go and see him."

"What!"

"That was about an hour ago. I've been stalling you here. I didn't want you to look too anxious."

Sigmund was halfway out of the restaurant.

"Remember the Stern contract," Bustanoby shouted. "Don't rush."

The young man walked down the street and paused in front of the Shubert office building. He composed himself. He told himself that he had written three pieces of music which were increasingly popular all over town and that he had a standing. He lit a cigarette and went up to the office. He hoped that he looked casual. That was the Broadway rule. Not to show anything. "My name is Romberg," he said to the receptionist. "J. J. Shubert would like to see me, I understand." He puffed on the cigarette.

In a few moments he was ushered into the producer's office. Shubert, seated behind a great desk, looked up and smiled. "Romberg," he said. "How is your piano-playing?"

"All right." Another cigarette.

"Sit down," the producer said. He picked up some printed music and looked at it. "You haven't been around to see me," he said.

"I have a tough schedule at the restaurant," Romberg replied.

Shubert studied the music, which Sigmund could now see was his own. Then the producer put the music carefully on the desk in front of him and, without looking up, without changing the tone of his voice, asked, "How would you like to write the music for my next Winter Garden show?"

Sigmund started to speak and then he remembered the Stern deal and what Bustanoby had told him. Instead, he dragged on his cigarette, and replied, "I have a job at Bustanoby's. It keeps me pretty busy."

Shubert looked up for the first time. "I think you can find

some time to write some music for me. Shall we call it a deal?"

Sigmund nodded slowly. "I'll try," he said. "Yes, we can call it a deal."

The producer picked up a bound manuscript. "The show is called 'The Whirl of the World' and is scheduled to open early in January." He handed the volume over to Romberg. "Book and lyrics are being written by Harold Atteridge. Here they are. Suppose you look this over and come back tomorrow. I'll have Atteridge here. You can get together with him and make some arrangements. I'll drop over to your restaurant every couple of nights when the crowd is gone and you can play what you've written for me." He pushed back from the desk and got up to his feet. "This could be a chance for you, Romberg. A great chance. We have an excellent cast for 'The Whirl of the World.' Willie and Eugene Howard, Ralph Hertz, Bernard Granville, the Dolly Sisters, June Eldridge, Walter C. Kelly, and quite a few others. It isn't every young composer who has a chance to work with artists like that. Good luck."

Sigmund nodded. "I'll be here tomorrow," he said. He walked out of the office. Once in the street he looked around carefully and then he leaped into the air and clicked his heels. He hugged the volume and rushed back to the restaurant. "Andre," he called out. "Andre! Willie Howard. Eugene Howard. June Eldridge."

The restaurant owner looked at him and sighed. "I see that you have got the job, Romy," he said a little sadly. "And I can see that it won't be very long before we shall have to look for another orchestra leader." He put his hand around the young man's shoulder. "Do your best with this," he said quietly. "Sometimes chances do not come twice. By the way, did you get a contract from Shubert?"

Romberg clapped his hand to his head. "My God, I forgot all about that!"

The following morning Romberg was introduced to Atteridge, who was one of the cleverest authors and lyricists on Broadway. The young composer fought to hide his awe of this man, with his imposing reputation. Atteridge put him at his ease immediately, treating him as though he were an established composer. They discussed means of working together and finally Sigmund broached a question which had worried him since the preceding day. "Would it be possible, Mr. Atteridge, for me to write the music before the lyrics are written? Only because my knowledge of the English language is not yet perfect." He asked the favor with some trepidation. The prestige of Atteridge was such that he was entitled to the privilege of writing his part first and then having the composer shape the music to fit his words. But the lyricist, with great courtesy, agreed to write the words to suit the music.

For the next few weeks the days and nights mingled without break. He worked harder than he had ever worked before, harder than he thought was possible. Hugo, worried, tried to make him slow up, but all that he could see before him was the deadline of opening night. He played, as usual, at the restaurant, for a period that stretched over more than twelve hours, with only brief breaks. Before and after this regular routine, and during the little rest periods, he pored over his composition. The producer kept his word, and once or twice a week appeared at the restaurant in the early morning hours and Romberg played his music on the piano. He seemed to be satisfied and that was all. With that to go on, Romberg continued his double work.

As the show progressed toward rehearsal, he had to leave the restaurant in the afternoons to attend. Andre Bustanoby could not have been kinder. He told the young composer that the theatrical job was the important one, and assured him that he had nothing to worry about. If the show was a flop, he would still have the same job he always had.

At the theatre Sigmund found that things were a little different

from the way he remembered them in Vienna. The speed and rush of New York, so different from the more leisurely Viennese way, was nowhere more evident than backstage. He found that the girls who were to appear in 'Whirl of the World' were the same girls who were appearing in the currently running Shubert revue, and that they too had to double—between the show in rehearsal and the show on the stage. The girls, among the most beautiful on the Broadway stage, were understandably short-tempered and exhausted under the grueling routine.

Here he found that what was known as Viennese charm stood him in good stead. He brought forth every ounce of personality he had, flattering the girls, complimenting them, treating them with an old-world courtesy. Being just twenty-seven and not impervious to the obvious attractions the girls possessed, this was not altogether difficult. However, he had a purpose in mind.

One of the numbers he wrote for the show was called 'My Lady's Fan,' and this was scheduled to be sung by the sixteen beautiful showgirls who were the pride of the Shubert collection. Sigmund, hoping to achieve something different, something more unusual than was expected, wrote the music to be sung in close harmony by the girls.

The girls needed special rehearsals for this. They were not hired as singers, but simply to look beautiful, and what he wanted required extra work. On them he turned the fullest flood of Viennese manners: he sent them candy and flowers and flattered them before the company. He kissed hands and listened to troubles and answered every objection they offered by stating simply that they were the most gorgeous women he had ever seen anywhere. That seemed to be an excellent answer. Despite their nightly schedule in the show then running, despite the demands of the normal rehearsals for the new show, they agreed to appear for additional time with the young composer.

This caused some stir. Jack Mason, the dance director of

'Whirl of the World,' attempted to capitalize on the presence of the statuesque beauties and have them spend some extra time with his numbers. They refused pointblank. A spokesman, who had received a lovely bottle of perfume the evening before, stated, "We will only rehearse with Romy and then we go home."

The producer was a relentless taskmaster. It appeared as though he wanted to inform himself from the very start of his new composer's capabilities. During the rehearsals, when Romberg was still writing music, rehearsing, playing at the restaurant, he asked him to write some additional numbers for another production called 'The Midnight Girl' which was scheduled to open six weeks after 'Whirl of the World.' The inexorable, machine-like sequence of Shubert productions went on without break. There always was a show in rehearsal, a show in planning, a show on some stage. Romberg took on the new task. During those weeks he scarcely slept, lived on sandwiches and gallons of black coffee.

On January 8, 1914, the day before the dress rehearsal of 'Whirl of the World' and two days before the opening, he entered the restaurant. His face was haggard and his eyes were bloodshot with exhaustion. Andre sat him down at a table and forced him to rest and eat a decent meal. Then Sigmund said, "Well, Andre, I just had a talk with J. J."

Bustanoby nodded. "I know what you are going to say. Shubert is pleased with your work. He wants you to leave us and go to work for him on a full-time basis."

Sigmund nodded. "That's about it."

Bustanoby took out a cigar. "It hardly seems to be true, but it is eighteen months." He lit the cigar. Then he said. "You know how proud we are of you, Romy. And you know how much we hate to see you go. This place will not seem the same again, ever." He shook his head. "Imagine having to find new music. And be-

ginning to fire orchestra leaders every couple of months again. Romy, you will be missed!"

"I won't ever forget how you played along with my crazy ideas," Sigmund said.

"You asked for a month, remember?" Andre chuckled. "I can tell you now. I knew all along that fifth couple had been hired by you. I'll tell you something else. My brother and I had made up our minds that no matter how that dance scheme of yours worked out you were going to stay with us."

5.

He sat huddled in a seat in the third row, next to J. J. Shubert, his eyes glued to the stage, his ears hearing every note, separately, from each instrument, from the chorus and each singer, each note separately as though he had a thousand ears for each sound. It was an experience he never was to forget. For the first time in his life he was listening to his music, from a stage, sung by professionals.

He watched Shubert's face from time to time as song after song was tossed from the stage. Willie and Eugene Howard finished an operatic number he had written for them—a number which was to become one of their standards for many years to come. Half of the numbers he had written already had been discarded and what was left was what the producer had considered the cream. Romberg had found, among other things, that it was necessary to write at least double the numbers needed so that the producer could exercise a choice. He had written more than three dozen songs to have twelve of them in the show.

He thought how only a few weeks before he had been satisfied, more or less, to play in a restaurant. Not entirely content, but with only the vaguest aspirations toward actual music-writing. And then, so suddenly that it still was not wholly believed, he had

been plunged into this work. And it was composition under pressure, with deadlines to be met, situations to be expressed, artists' personalities and abilities to be considered, producers to be pleased. And to make it more difficult, it was not his kind of music at all.

For, sitting there listening to the first professional exposition of his music from a stage, he knew that writing this tinkly work was not his baby. He was not and did not intend to become a composer of dance music. Even then, excited as he was to be hired as a staff composer for the Shuberts, he knew that to be satisfied fully he would have to move ahead one day and compose his kind of music; and, Americanized as he was becoming, his kind of music as he understood it was the music he had known in Vienna: ballads which could be sung and which would be remembered.

Dance music, even then, before radio exhausted a song in a matter of weeks, was brief music, with a short life. What he aspired to was the composition of music which might take longer to find a way into the hearts of listeners, but which would, once it had entered that sanctuary, remain there not for weeks or months, but for all time.

Now he sat up straighter. This was the 'My Lady's Fan' number. This was the place where he hoped that Shubert would take notice and realize that he had something a little different from a routine score for his show. Then he looked again. There were not sixteen girls on stage but only eight. And then, as he made out their faces, he realized with a terrible sinking feeling in his stomach that these were the eight girls to whom he had assigned only the harmony. The orchestra started and the girls began to sing. There was no melody.

Shubert shifted uneasily. Romberg bolted from his seat and rushed to the stage. "Forget about the harmony," he shouted. "Just sing the melody!" The girls, unfamiliar with the melody,

struggled through the number. Romberg slunk back to his seat. He looked questioningly at Shubert and then whispered what had happened. Shubert in turn explained that at the last minute it had been decided to have only eight girls for the 'Fan' number, and as luck had it, the eight girls who sang the harmony had been left in. No one had bothered to notify the composer because no one had suspected he would have tried to do anything more than have the girls sing the number straight.

The 'Whirl of the World' opened the following evening, January 10, 1914, and whatever tenseness Romberg had felt in the rehearsal was nothing to how he felt as he stood in the rear of the theatre, his back against a wall, watching the men and women in evening dress enter and find their way to their seats. These strangers, these persons who walked by him, laughing, talking, wholly unaware of his presence and who he was and what he had contributed to the show they were about to witness, these persons with their casual manner, their indifference, their lightness, were to be the judges of his work. He tried to find comfort in the faces. He wanted to introduce himself and shake their hands and ask them to be generous as they listened to his music.

He saw Ann and her father enter. He rushed up to them, grateful for the sight of familiar faces. Roberts held out his hand. "This is a big night for you, Sigmund. I know it's going to go over."

"Thanks," he said. "Ann. Dimple."

The girl smiled. He kissed the dimple. "For luck," he said. Then he said. "I'll be sitting next to you, more or less, during the show."

As they went down the aisle he saw the Bustanoby brothers and their wives enter the theatre. He hurried over to them and greeted them. Andre told him he had arranged for a celebration at the

restaurant after the performance. "I hope it will be a celebration and not a wake," Sigmund said.

"You can get drunk at either," Andre said.

The orchestra struck up the overture and the curtain rose and the opening chorus started the show on its way. Sigmund slipped into a seat next to Ann Roberts. She reached out and took his hand and squeezed it reassuringly. "Dimple," he whispered. "Dimple." Scene after scene was played. He could remain seated only for the shortest periods. Between scenes he left the seat and ran out for a few drags on a cigarette. He paced up and down the rear of the theatre. During intermission he mingled with the audience in the lobby. It seemed to his disappointed ears that they discussed everything in the world except the show they were seeing.

The Bustanobys, Roberts and his daughter, and Sigmund went up to the restaurant. For the first time in his life he started the traditional after-opening vigil, waiting for the morning papers to appear with their reviews. Andre called across the table, "Romy, what do you think of the music here?" He glanced up. He hadn't noticed. On the dais, in his old place, were new musicians. He looked at them with sudden shock. "Our old customers have asked for you," Andre said. "I hated to have to tell them that you were gone for good. I just tell them that you've taken a leave of absence to write music for shows." Then he added, "And if anything goes wrong, that always stands."

Champagne was opened and toasts were made. Sigmund acknowledged them almost automatically. What would the papers say? He could have worried less. The momentum of the Winter Garden shows was too great to be affected too much one way or the other by the music. The shows were gaited for comedy and the display of girls and the music was scarcely more than incidental.

The most that was asked of it was that it not get too much in the way.

A half-dozen times during the morning he sent a busboy to see if the papers were out yet. It was not much before dawn, the restaurant empty of all its regular customers, when the boy finally returned with his arms loaded with the newspapers. Now, around the table, were only the two brothers and Sigmund. Each of them grabbed papers and began to hunt for the theatrical pages.

In their notices, the critics agreed that the Shuberts had put together another revue, neither better nor worse than the others. In all the comments there was only one mention of the fact that the music had been composed by a young newcomer named Sigmund Romberg.

X

He walked up Broadway toward the Winter Garden. It was early May and somehow the magic of the new spring had found its way even to Broadway. May was a lover's month, he thought.

He entered the theatre. The cast was gathered. He greeted friends as he walked toward the stage. J. J. Shubert was standing in a corner of the stage talking to a young girl he had never seen before. The producer saw him and called to him. He walked over. The girl was very young and very lovely, with a shy, almost timid manner. "Romy," the producer said. "I want you to meet a new singer. This young child is just over from London and this will be her first Broadway show." He smiled at the girl. "Miss Miller, this is Sigmund Romberg, the man who will write your songs. Romy, this is Miss Marilyn Miller."

The girl held out her hand and smiled. It was a warm smile, and filled with charm. "How do you do, Mr. Romberg," she said. "I thank you in advance for the songs you write for me and I promise to try and not hurt your music too much."

"Welcome to our American stage," he said. "And I thank *you* in advance for the inspiration you will give me."

"I predict a great career for this girl," J. J. said. "Let's see what you can do to get her started, Romy."

The girl twinkled another smile and then the producer led her off to meet others in the cast. Romberg followed her with his eyes. There was undoubtedly something fresh and different about the girl. She had a winsome manner, and if it could be projected across the footlights just as it was she would win everyone who listened to her. She was something quite different from the ordinary ingenue and he began to think of attempting something unusual with her.

The show in which Marilyn Miller would be introduced to the American public was one of the annual Winter Garden 'Passing Shows,' this one of 1914, scheduled to open June 10. It was the third Shubert production for Romberg, 'The Midnight Girl' already having been launched. His producers were eminently satisfied with his work, he was respected in theatrical circles, his salary was excellent, and he was not far away from having enough money put away to make that long-planned trip home. But he also was not very happy. So far he had not written a smash hit, nothing to lift him above the show, nothing that people hummed and whistled and sang, knowing they were singing a Romberg tune.

So far, he thought, he had been swept along in the tempo of the shows themselves. His music had virtually been lost. But now, with this new girl, it might be possible to join her in her debut. It would be fine if the girl and a Romberg hit could be presented to the public for the first time together.

Several days later he handed her a sheet of music. "Look this over, Marilyn," he said. "Bernard Granville will sing it in the first act and you will repeat it in the second. It's called 'Omar Khayam.' "

" 'A loaf of bread, a jug of wine . . .' and a song by Romberg."

"Sung by Miller. See how you like it."

She winked and then set to work with the music. Her voice was clear and sweet and pure, and as she learned the melody and lyrics Romberg was more and more certain this would be his chance.

When she finished that day, she rushed to him and said, "Oh, Romy, I like it. I *like* it so much. Thank you." She hugged him and danced away.

The show opened on schedule and Marilyn Miller was a smashing success. She sang 'Omar Khayam' to an enchanted audience and for the first time Sigmund felt a real pride in his work. Marilyn came off the stage. Her face was flushed and her eyes were filled with tears. She rushed up to Sigmund and threw her arms around him and kissed him, and he turned her back to the stage and pushed her on again. "Go out there and take another bow," he said. "This is the very greatest moment in your life."

2.

Hugo looked up from his books. "Well?"

Sigmund sat down heavily. "Well, the contract is dissolved all right, but it's too damned late. The song is killed."

"How can it be killed? It's such a success in the show?"

"But how can it become a hit with the people without words? Oh, damn it to hell, why did all this have to happen just now!"

He lit a cigarette and slumped in his chair. He had just returned from a courtroom where his contract with Stern, the music publisher, had been dissolved as being without equity. That was a good thing, but the squabbling with Stern had proven an effective blanket on the success of 'Omar Khayam.'

Before the contract was legally declared void, however, Stern had already published the 'Omar Khayam' without lyrics. The

song thus had only the limited appeal of a semi-classical number. No one could learn the words.

"I'm afraid we'll just have to write this one off," he said to his brother. "At least one thing: I know I can write hits."

"Did you have doubts?" Hugo asked.

"Well, not to have doubts is one thing. But to write the hit is another." He shook his head. "This song could have swept the country if people could only have got hold of the words to hang the music on. And how she sings it! Like an angel." He sighed. "How are you getting on with your work?"

"It moves. Not excitingly, but it moves."

Sigmund rose. "I have to bathe and change. I want to catch the matinee today and then I have to see J. J. this afternoon. He's got a new show cooking."

"Show, show, show. Show and theatre. You practically live there," Hugo said.

"Just like you live in your books," his brother grinned. "But you can't go around and pinch your books."

"And a new show to write. Why don't you take a rest?"

"I'll rest on the boat going across."

He caught part of the show and again listened to Marilyn sing his song, and then he went over to Shubert's office. There he was told that the next show was to star an up-and-coming young comedian and singer named Al Jolson. The show was called 'Dancing Around' and was scheduled for an October 10th premiere. There was considerable excitement in the Shubert office because this was Jolson's first starring role in the Winter Garden.

As he left the office, Sigmund thought that this would work out well. He would finish the new show and then leave the country right after the opening and return to Belisce. He would have enough money saved by then to enable him to spend several months at home. He thought of spending the holidays again with

his parents. He wondered how the annual party at the Gutmann chateau would seem to him now.

He bought a newspaper and then went into a small restaurant for dinner. He opened the paper and glanced over the front page. He started to turn the page when his eye was caught by a story printed near the bottom of the page. His flesh started to crawl as he read that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew to Emperor Franz Josef and heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, had been shot and killed in a little Serbian town called Sarajevo.

The waiter put a plate in front of him. "Here it is, sir," he said. "Nice and rare the way you like it. I'll have your beer over in a moment."

He left a bill on the table and hurried out.

3.

He got back home before Hugo left for school and showed him the paper. He watched his brother's face as he read the news. "The poor Emperor," Hugo said quietly. "The man is cursed. First Rudolf, and then the Empress being murdered, and now this." He pursed his lips. "The Habsburgs have run out of their luck."

"Has the world run out of its luck, Hugo?" Sigmund asked.

"You mean, could this mean war?" Hugo thought for a few moments. "It can hardly be. This is the twentieth century. Men don't go to war these days to settle matters the way they used to. Anyway, it is the Kaiser who is always talking war, not the Emperor. Germany isn't mixed up in this, thank God."

"Perhaps you're right."

"The other night one of the men in my class was saying that if there ever was another war they would use flying machines to drop bombs on places. Can you imagine that?"

"I think we better cable home," Sigmund said. He looked at

the newspaper again. "Anyway, the editors don't seem to think this is such important news and they probably know better than we do."

"You write the message," Hugo said. "I'll send it out when I go."

"I wish I had followed the way things were going in Europe. The Balkans seem so puny and far away from here. I've lost touch, Hugo."

"So have I," his brother said. "And I'm ashamed. How quickly you lose yourself in this country. It is so big it swallows you. But if they wanted a war they could have had a big enough war during the last couple of Balkan wars. Anyway Franz Josef won't want to declare war on Serbia. And if he did it doesn't seem to involve anyone else. Who could be concerned about a quarrel between Austria-Hungary and Serbia?"

In the days that followed, the brothers read every line they could on the Balkan crisis and tried to pierce the fog of diplomatic and reportorial confusion that seemed to envelop the whole affair. The newspaper stories were uninformed. Few persons in the United States had ever heard of Franz Ferdinand and fewer had any conception of the interweaving of Balkan affairs. The trouble was that in the United States the Balkans were only places mentioned in musical comedies and operettas. Whenever a mythical kingdom was needed for the stage or for the pages of some flamboyant novel it was always somewhere in the Balkans, and the average person thought of that part of Europe as a kind of never-never land where nothing serious could really happen. Someone would always settle the problem by the third act.

The newspapers continued to minimize the situation, and it was not until two weeks later, when the brothers received a letter from their mother, that they realized how serious indeed matters were becoming. Mrs. Romberg expressed her happiness in the

fact that her two sons were *safe* in the United States and would not become involved in what she plainly feared was going to happen. "Do not think, my two sons, that you must return to Europe. You have set your roots in a new land and a new life and your loyalties now are with the country of your adoption. I thank God each day that both of you have already started to become United States citizens and I urge you to remain where you are, no matter how much pressure is brought to bear upon you. It is the greatest happiness of both your father and your mother that you are thousands of miles away from Europe at this time."

When they finished the letter, which had told them far more than the words in it, the brothers saw that their parents expected war, and Adam Romberg's ideas on the matter would not be careless ones, but would be based on information he received as the local head of the widespread Gutmann industry.

Sigmund lit a cigarette and tried to clarify his thoughts. What was he to do? He had given himself completely to his new country and until these tragic events had transpired he had forgotten to think of himself as anything but an American. In five years the United States had given him much. He had arrived in this foreign country and in a few short years he had found the opportunity to develop his talent in a free and equal competition with native-born Americans. His foreign birth had never handicapped him and he knew better than most that there were few places of which that could be said.

These things were true but the answer was still not that simple. Birth, tradition, original roots, inheritance, could not be dismissed that easily. Austria was his native land and the Austrians and Hungarians and Croats and the rest of the mixed-up crew were his people and a few years in New York could never change that.

His thoughts tormented him. He could not work. Not all the

urgings of Shubert could bring him to think of writing music. His nature changed; he ceased to be the light-hearted youth his friends had come to know. Lines appeared in his face and his walk seemed less brisk and his eyes were always tired. He lay awake at night, struggling with himself to determine where his loyalties lay. And then, a month after the assassination, on July 28, the Empire declared war on Serbia; and then, so quickly that it almost was impossible to keep the sequence of events straight, England, France, Germany, and Russia were involved. What everyone had said could not happen had happened.

Three days later he received a notice from the Austro-Hungarian Consulate. As a reserve officer in the Imperial Army he was ordered to board the steamer *George Washington* of the Austrian-Lloyd Line within eight days, to be returned to the fatherland.

It now had become an incredible reality. All the months of service as a volunteer, the not-unpleasant border-patrol duty, the army that had seemed to be such a comedy of an army. The maneuvers, which had been such jokes, the parades and the marching, the fancy uniforms that split at the seams. It was as though a military chorus playing in a theatrical fairy tale had suddenly found itself called upon to perform the functions of a real army. Ernoe and Szabados and Jellicheck.

He carried the consulate order in his pocket for several days. He had taken out his first papers, as had Hugo, and so both were legally absolved from obeying the summons. If he did obey it it meant he rejected his citizenship in the United States and once again became an Austrian national.

He was hypersensitive among strangers. His ears were always ready to hear attacks on his native land. He walked around almost with a chip on his shoulder, ready to defend the country of his birth and maintain his loyalty to it. But he found, to his amazement and gratification, that no one seemed to hold Austria to

blame at all; all hatred was directed against the Kaiser and Germany and it was this, perhaps more than anything else, that influenced his decision.

On the last day on which he could obey the order he notified the consulate that as a future citizen of the United States he would have to disregard the call to arms.

There was a vast relief within him as he cast his lot. But it did not quiet the part of him which continued to insist that he had failed in his duty. Work was the only answer. He plunged into the new Jolson show, which was weeks behind. He worked all hours, day and night, and deliberately got himself so exhausted that when he went to bed he was unable to keep his eyes open, he was too spent to lie awake and listen to the voices. He wrote letter after letter to his parents and received answers only at intervals. They assured him they were in no danger.

On a Sunday morning in the last week in September the troupe left New York on a special train for the New Haven opening. The atmosphere was tense. The entire company was nervous. The show was not considered quite ready; the different parts had not entirely jelled. Jolson himself was tensest of all. This show was supposed to launch him in a starring role for the first time in a Winter Garden show, and the rehearsals had seemed to indicate that in the romantic role Bernard Granville would overshadow him.

Arriving in New Haven, the cast went immediately to the Shubert Theatre. Scenery was hauled over and at eight o'clock that evening the dress rehearsal was started. The doors of the theatre were locked and no one—musician, stagehand, chorus girl, principal, or producer, even the theatre manager—was permitted to leave. Opening was Monday night and this was the last opportunity to get the production operating properly.

The rehearsal went on through the night, through the following morning, into the afternoon. Food was brought into the theatre and those who were not actually onstage munched sandwiches and drank coffee and then curled up in chairs or on the floor in dark corners and tried to catch some sleep.

The rivalry between Jolson and Granville was intense. Jolson worked without a break until three o'clock Monday morning and then abruptly left the stage. He went into an electrician's booth in the second balcony, locked himself in, and went to sleep. At ten o'clock he awoke and went back on stage and began to rehearse again.

It was not until four o'clock in the afternoon, just a little more than four hours from curtain, that the exhausted company was dismissed with orders to return to the theatre at seven o'clock that evening for an eight-fifteen opening.

The curtain rose on time that night and the performance of everyone in the show was memorable. The entertainment genius of Al Jolson catapulted across the footlights and the singing comedian walked away with the show. It was of no importance whatsoever that the following night the reaction set in and the performers gave a listless and dispirited show. By that time everyone knew they had a hit on their hands and that a new star had walked across the scene.

4.

In the hot summer night he picked up the letter again and looked through the wildly written lines. How many years had passed now since he had seen her face, heard her voice that could have in its speaking some of the same husky music she could put into her songs. It was July, 1915, and the war had cursed Europe for almost a year and it was more than six years since he

had held her hand on Kahlenberg. And yet, in the scrawled writing he could plainly see her.

He lit a cigarette and held the letter to his nostrils. There was a faint perfume on the pages, a perfume that had somehow clung to the paper in its journey from Vienna. He started from the beginning and read through the letter again. It was in some respects a startling document. The war, she wrote, was an exciting affair and she was happier than she had been for many years. Vienna was itself now a city of excitement, a new kind of excitement; entertainment was the greatest industry in the city and there were so many, so very many, handsome officers passing through. "There is nothing that doesn't make money now," she wrote. "For a while it was hard for me to get work. That was why I did not write. I do not like to speak to you on paper when things are bad with me. That is the way it is between us. I moved to a very small place of which I was so ashamed. But how different it is now! Now, anyone who can sing or dance in any way is able to command a price. I am singing in a large cafe which is patronized almost exclusively by officers and I am the star of the show. You would hardly recognize your old Vienna, my Sigmund. I think you are missing something. . . ."

He put the letter on his desk and for a moment closed his eyes. He had to open them quickly lest he fall asleep sitting up. He had never been as tired as he was these days and he was grateful for the physical depletion which permitted him to sleep. It was still the only anesthetic.

During these black months Shubert had assigned one show after another to him, and now he had four in a batch. It was like an assembly line and he could not falter for a moment. The shows were scheduled, the theatres prepared, the casts hired, the myriad business of show production consummated, and at the proper time he had to supply the music.

He had got to know his boss well during those months and he

had developed a profound respect for a man who was, he felt, quite misunderstood. There were many clashes between the two men because both were strong-willed; Shubert knew exactly what he wanted and Romberg, as he increased his knowledge of the theatre, had more and more definite ideas of how he thought things should be done. But the clashes were of a professional nature always, and never personal, and the two men were friends.

Romberg had discovered many things about his secretive boss. He had found that Shubert quietly subscribed to and inaugurated a number of charities of which few persons were aware, and which he, in a stubbornly prideful manner, would not let be publicized. He preferred, it seemed, to be regarded by Broadway as a determined man whose only desire was power and theatres.

The brothers Shubert were now in the full tide of their struggle with the older Klaw and Erlanger organization, and in addition to producing the stream of shows which filled their houses, they were concerned with buying theatre sites, building new houses, spreading their holdings on the road. Romberg, watching J. J. Shubert, often wondered how he was able to retain his sanity with the diverse interests which constantly occupied his mind.

The producer in his turn had a deep respect for the talents of the young composer he had found in a restaurant. He permitted him to have his way more often than anyone else connected with the organization, and it was a source of satisfaction to Romberg that if he won his point in a debate about some question or another and he turned out to be right, the producer never hesitated to admit openly that he had been wrong.

As though the music alone were not enough during those first months of the war, Romberg plunged into other things to keep himself occupied. It seemed to him that he did not want to permit one minute of the day to be unused; in that minute he might slip away from New York and back to Europe and again torment himself with recrimination.

In his own quiet way he attempted to help others who were not as fortunate as he was. Shubert, for instance, was a fanatic about beautiful girls in his shows. No matter if a girl sang like an angel, if she had no beauty she stood no chance. Romberg, when he could, tried to fit some of these girls who had voices but not much appearance into some role or other, arranging for them to be positioned backstage, where their lack of beauty would not attract too much attention. He was not entirely unselfish about this, because he was, after all, interested in having the music he wrote sound well, and he found voice after voice which deserved to be heard onstage, if only in a chorus, housed by a body which could never meet Shubert standards.

Listening to auditions as he did, he became acquainted with the practices of singing teachers who extracted large sums of money from hopefuls, regardless of whether there was talent or not. One day, after listening to three girls in a row who had no voices whatsoever, but who had been mulcted of large sums of money by these unscrupulous voice instructors, he went in high fury to the district attorney's office and urged officials to start an investigation into this fraud. The condition was too ordinary, he found, and there were no laws violated: no one could stop a person from accepting money from a girl who thought she wanted a Broadway career. Sigmund did make it a point from then on, however, to attempt to persuade these unfortunate girls to return to their homes and forget their dreams of Broadway success.

He also became involved in another endeavor. Pay scale for the musicians was extremely low, averaging about $32 a week for eight performances and as many free rehearsals as were required. Romberg became a stanch supporter of the musicians as they developed their organizations to better these conditions. He was distressed to see, however, that as the unions managed to raise the pay scales, the numbers of men employed in orchestras were correspondingly lowered.

This condition began, in fact, to change the composition of the orchestras, which originally contained thirty to forty men; soon they were cut to half that number, and, in order not to lessen the effects more than necessary, individual volume was required to replace the diminishing quantitative volume. Clarinets were replaced by saxophones. Violins were slowly eliminated. Drummers were consolidated. A piano was put into the theatrical pits to replace second violins and violas. And so, as the result of economy, so that the impression of large-sized orchestras could be created by a few men, the present-day jazz bands emerged from the oldfashioned orchestras.

There were other changes. A new entertainment medium, the motion picture, began to make its appearance. The movies were extremely crude and the legitimate players laughed at them. And yet the public seemed to take to them.

After the Jolson show began its run, Romberg wrote the music for 'Maid in America,' which opened in February, and the next month was given no less than four different shows to write for at the same time. 'Hands Up' opened on July 22. The other three were 'The Blue Paradise,' scheduled for an August opening; a new revue, 'A World of Pleasure,' to open in October; and additional music for 'Ruggles of Red Gap,' which was set for December.

He had taken on the assignment without inspiration, grateful only for more work, more and more work, but when he began to read the script of 'The Blue Paradise' he felt an excitement in him, and when he finished it he knew that again he had a chance to lift himself out of the groove he was wearing deeper and deeper.

And on the day that he had started his plans for 'The Blue Paradise' he had received his letter from Mariska, and now, in the hot, airless room, he thought, with a kind of sense of fitness for

these things, how nice it was that the two should have come together.

'The Blue Paradise' was a Viennese importation. Based upon an operetta by Leo Stein and Bela Jenbasch, with music by Edmund Eysler, it had already achieved a success abroad. Romberg's assignment was to add some fresh melodies for the Shubert production. He was required to write but four additional numbers to an already attractive score, but he thought that, even with the limitations, he might be able to bring forth a hit.

The story, with Mariska's letter before him, started a torrent of memories. The scene was a small inn in Vienna called the Blue Paradise. The story was of a youth who falls in love with the flower girl at the inn, and who is sent to America by his father to break up the romance. There was a farewell scene in the garden of the restaurant, and it was for this scene that Romberg was commissioned to write one of his numbers, and it was in this scene that he saw his chance to write something that people might not forget.

The scene was made for him. The girl, in singing the song he would write, was supposed to pretend she was saying only a temporary farewell; it was plain she knew that the goodbye was forever. He wrote the song and called it 'Auf Wiedersehen' and the words to it were written by a young lyricist named Herbert Reynolds, and when he finished he knew that he had fashioned his song well.

For the first time since he had started to write music he granted an old request made by his father. He sent him the music of the song, 'Auf Wiedersehen.'

Trouble started when the show opened on the road. The leading lady proved unsuitable and she was dismissed while still on the road and before anyone else had been found to replace her. Rom-

berg was in despair. He seemed to be under a curse. First with 'Omar Khayam' and the Stern difficulties. And now this.

He rushed back to New York and joined in the frantic attempts to find a new leading lady. No one who was auditioned was acceptable. The part was not an easy one. It called for a young girl, a fresh and simple girl, who could express sweetness and naïvete, and yet who possessed a fine voice. There were many calloused veterans of the Broadway scene who tried out for the part, but a mature singer would have ruined the show.

After several days of fruitless endeavor there was some talk of calling the whole thing off. Romberg walked through the town in anguish. When he called Shubert one afternoon he was told that a voice scout had reported there was a young student at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia who had a beautiful voice. Romberg flew to Pennsylvania Station, joined his associates, and they journeyed to Philadelphia. There they were introduced to a young girl whose name was Vivienne Segal. Her appearance was in her favor. She was young and wholly unspoiled, and, at the sudden appearance of the Broadway men, was half-frightened to death.

Romberg took her hand and, with an urgency she could not have understood, he said: "Please sing for me. Don't be nervous. Sing anything you want and try to imagine that we are not even here. Think that you are singing for one of your teachers. Of course you will be nervous, but that won't matter. We expect you to be nervous and if your voice is sweet and true we will forget all about your nervousness."

Trembling, the girl began to sing. When she finished Romberg rushed up to her. "You will do," he said. His voice was choked. "You will do. Thank God, you will do!"

And then he held the girl as she burst into tears.

5.

The curtain fell on the dress rehearsal. J. H. Benrimo, in charge of the stage for the production, turned in his seat and looked questioningly at Romberg.

The composer shook his head. He gnawed at his nails. "It's not going to work out, Benrimo. The girl just isn't experienced enough. She has the voice of an angel and the exact appearance for the part but you simply cannot take a student out of a music school and throw her into a Broadway show this way." He lit a cigarette, his hand shaking. "What in God's name can we do? It's too late to do anything, I guess, except sit and suffer through the opening."

Benrimo patted him on the shoulder. "Take it easy, Romy," he said. "Perhaps it will turn out better than you think."

"What in God's name can we do?" Romberg repeated. "We've done everything. We've delayed the opening for a week so she could get set. We've cut down all her speaking lines to make it easy for her. About all she has to do now is sing a few songs. She's young and she's beautiful and some day she may be a fine actress but right now she's a schoolgirl, Benrimo, and she's going to ruin my song."

"It's all in the day's work, Romy."

Romberg looked at him with a tortured face. "I've written show after show and I haven't give a damn for anything but this one. You know what that one song means to me."

"Well, if there's nothing to do, don't do it," Benrimo said. "Take it easy, Romy. Things never turn out as bad as you think they will."

He wandered around backstage. The familiar exciting atmosphere of opening night had everyone tense, but Romberg felt as

though he were at a wake. He wondered how the actors and actresses could be laughing, joking. Didn't they know what was going to happen? He could not bear to look at Vivienne Segal. He was afraid of what he might say. He knew how terrified she must be and he thought if he told her how he felt she might quit in a funk.

Just after eight o'clock Benrimo walked up to him. His usually jovial face was drawn. "What's the trouble, Benrimo?" Romberg said. "I can read it on your face. Now what else is the matter?"

"We were just notified that the orchestra leader missed his train in Long Island. He won't be here in time for the opening."

Shubert rushed over. "Romy, you'll have to go into the pit and start the overture. When that s.o.b. shows up I'll kill him."

"I can't," Romberg said. "I never conducted a show in my life."

"You've got to do it," the producer said. "Go on. Right now." He spoke as though it were the simplest thing in the world. "It's not hard. It will only be for the overture. He'll be here by then."

Benrimo caught the producer's eye. He slapped Romy on the back. "Hell, it's easy. Anybody can wave a stick."

Romberg looked at the producer and then at the stage manager. He wet his lips. He nodded. He went down into the pit and emerged in the orchestra pit. The musicians looked at him in surprise. "Look, boys," he said, bending low. "I've never conducted a show before. I've conducted orchestras—but never with singers on a stage. I'll give you the downbeat and start you off together but from that point on you'll be on your own. I promise that although I'll keep waving my stick I won't disturb you and I'll follow your tempo faithfully."

To a man, the players nodded reassuringly. The first violinist said, "Don't worry, Mr. Romberg. We'll take care of everything."

Then the composer stood up in the pit and faced the men. The house lights went down and he raised his baton and brought it down sharply.

At that moment the conductor broke into the theatre, breathless. Shubert, his nerves almost shot, made a rush for him, but Benrimo got between them. He held the producer and said, "You have my permission to fire him—but after the show, not before." Then he gave the conductor a shove. "Get down there, fast."

He stuck his head into the pit from under the stage just as the final notes of the overture ended. Romberg, dripping with sweat, handed him the baton and murmured a prayer of thanks, and then ducked out. He got backstage just as the curtain rose on the prologue of the play. He found Benrimo and went to him. He needed support. The two men watched the opening scene. It was going smoothly. The big thing for the composer, however, was the 'Auf Wiedersehen' number, which did not go on for another fifteen minutes.

"It's not going too bad," Benrimo said.

Romberg stood back and looked at him. Benrimo, trained in the English tradition, was famous for appearing on opening nights in white tie, tails, white kid gloves, and patent leather pumps. Now he was gripping the gloves in his hands, pulling them taut. Romberg smiled. "You are dressed perfectly tonight, my friend. You look exactly like a funeral director."

"Watch the stage," Benrimo said.

"Why? Unless Vivienne can pretend her heart is breaking wide open the show's a flop as far as I'm concerned."

Benrimo looked at him with a peculiar glint in his eyes. "Don't worry, Romy. I've still got something up my sleeve. Now listen. Go somewhere and get yourself a drink. I don't want you around for the next few minutes."

"But 'Auf Wiedersehen' goes on soon."

"Then go around to the front and watch it from the audience. Now, God damn it, go! I'm the boss around here now."

He watched his friend walk out, and then he looked around. At that moment Vivienne Segal appeared. She was radiant. She was dressed in the simple costume of a flower girl and she carried a large basket of posies. She waited in the wings for the cue which would bring her onstage for the number. Benrimo fixed a murderous scowl on his face and walked up to her. She looked up and a frightened expression brushed across her eyes. "Well, Mr. Benrimo," she whispered. "Wish me luck."

He waved his hand contemptuously.

"What's the matter?" she asked anxiously.

"I hate to think what you are going to do with that song."

The girl began to tremble. "What do you mean?"

Benrimo looked at her with disgust. "Romy is a friend of mine. He's written a beautiful song and it should be sung beautifully. And now you're going to go on that stage and ruin it."

The eyes of the music student filled with tears. She drew away from the seemingly angry stage manager. Under her makeup she turned white and the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"What gave you the damned nerve to take this part?" Benrimo said viciously, moving up to her again. "A schoolgirl trying to be an actress! Banking on your good looks to take you where your talent never could!" He grabbed both her shoulders and shook her violently. By now the girl was hysterical. Then, on her cue, he pushed her out toward the stage.

Romberg, in the audience, watched the girl lurch onto the stage. From where he stood, behind the last row in the audience, he could see the tears course down her cheeks, could see her shaking from her head to her toes. He gripped the wooden guardrail, his heart tripping wildly.

The tenor took her into his arms and tried to comfort her.

"Let me hold you close to my heart,
Brush away your tears, dear . . ."

She nestled in his arms, hiding her head. Then, quivering, she raised her face; her voice breaking, she joined him. Romberg held his two hands together in terror as she sobbed her way through the music.

"Telling me 'Auf Wiedersehen'
This time means goodbye, dear . . ."

Back and forth the girl and her lover sang and the audience was gripped in the tragedy of the farewell and Romberg listened with his blood turned to ice.

"Calm all your fears and dry all your tears,
Love will remain when all else shall wane,
Guiding me through the years,
Auf Wiedersehen, Auf Wiedersehen . . ."

The girl finished almost in a faint. The audience was silent for a few moments, and then Romberg, rushing backstage, heard the thundering explosion of applause for a new star and for a great song. He tore around and collided with Benrimo. "By God," he gasped. "Where did it come from?"

"My sleeve," Benrimo said.

XI

BROADWAY was not unaware that across the Atlantic Ocean there was a place called Europe, where, at the moment, some men were fighting with each other. Cognizance of the undeniable fact that most people in this country started out originally from Europe, was taken in the next production, called, with startling appropriateness in 1915, 'A World of Pleasure.'

The finale of the first act in this production, which included such personalities as Clifton Crawford, the English comedian, Lou Holtz, Stella Mayhew, Kitty Gordon, and Sydney Greenstreet, and an Oriental dancer being introduced to the American public, Sahari Djeli, was intended to indicate that the United States was a Melting Pot.

The first part of the scene showed the different persons from different parts of the world arriving at Ellis Island, and then, lest the point be missed, the next part showed a huge melting pot with a fake fire under it. In the final portion, the whole company trooped down a staircase built from the fly gallery to the footlights. The stairway divided at its base and between the two sections was placed a huge replica of the American eagle. The company, wearing variations of American uniforms, spread around the eagle and sang the finale.

At the dress rehearsal, despite the tramping of the large cast down the stairway, despite the volume of song that poured from the stage, it was felt that something was lacking. It was not, someone explained, a 'wow finish.'

Everyone thought. There was the American eagle. There were American uniforms. There had been a Melting Pot. What else could be added?

Someone brought forth an idea which was in itself simple: A wire would be strung from a point in the balcony to a point just above the American eagle. At the climax of the scene a girl would come sailing down the wire, bearing an American flag in each hand.

There were a number of persons who looked on the suggestion with something less than enthusiasm, but the American flag won out. How could the scene miss with not one American flag but two of them?

The idea was presented to the chorus girls and a volunteer was sought. When none was forthcoming, an additional fee of ten dollars a week was offered to whoever would take the part. It was explained carefully that no danger was involved. The girl would be belted, fastened to a ring on the wire, and then gravity would take care of everything else. Finally a young girl volunteered.

The wire was drawn, and on the afternoon of the opening a small sandbag, weighing as much as the girl, was tied to the ring and released. The wire didn't break and the sandbag ended on the stage where it was supposed to, so it was agreed all would be well. "There is only one thing to remember," the girl was told. "Be sure and keep your legs folded under you as you come down through the air, but when you reach the stage be sure to put your legs down to stop yourself." The girl promised to remember and one of the chorus boys was given the duty of unsnapping her from the wire when she made her landing.

The show opened in the Winter Garden that evening. Romberg, who had supplied the music, elected to stand in a side aisle in the orchestra to see exactly what was going to happen.

The finale arrived. The cast walked down the stairway. The girl was in the balcony waiting. The orchestra conductor turned around and, seeing the girl poised, ducked under the runway which projected from the stage.

The girl let go. There was a shriek from the audience as the body suddenly hurtled through the air. The girl remembered the first part of her instructions. She kept her legs folded. But she forgot to put them down when she arrived at the stage.

Instead of braking herself she went right on, crashing into the papier-mache American eagle, burying herself deep in the bristling breast of the huge bird, leaving only her rump sticking out, facing the audience.

The chorus boy did not lose his head. He stuck his hand into the torn bird and attempted to find the place where the girl was hooked onto the wire to free her. In the torn and battered mess he could not find it. The girl started to kick. The audience howled. Someone ordered the curtain lowered, but the wire, still stretched taut, prevented it from dropping in the center. There was left a large inverted V which had, for its centerpiece, the still-exposed rump.

Everyone tried to free the girl. Nothing could be done. At last a stagehand, in overalls, wire nippers in hand, appeared from the wings. The hilarious audience gave him a hand. He blinked at the footlights and then, expressionlessly walked to the girl, stuck his hand into the punctured eagle, and cut the wire. The girl extricated herself. Being a trouper and aware of the greatness of the moment, she turned immediately to the audience, took the stagehand's arm, and bowed.

2.

The holiday season, no matter where it was spent, always meant Belisce and the clouds of snow that fell on the little village and how the buildings and the streets were changed by the magic of the snow into a crystal fairyland and the visits on New Year's Day and the greetings of friends in the streets and the party at the Gutmanns'. He would think of his home and his parents and the slender cigars his father smoked and the way his fingers rippled on the piano keys and how his mother sat and listened and raised her head when there was a part she liked particularly well and her soft sweet face and the faint odor of the perfume she wore. He thought of them often, but he thought of them most frequently during the holiday season, and although there had been so many holiday seasons away from Belisce—this one was the ninth in New York—the feeling for home was as strong as ever.

Together with Ann, for whom he had conceived a great fondness, he joined his friend Benrimo at the Beaux Arts Restaurant one evening. Benrimo, huge, expansive, his great mustaches curled mightily, spoke at length about a new play he was writing, a play called 'Yellow Jacket.' As he spoke, gesturing largely, Sigmund seemed to see him in a new light; somehow Benrimo had been someone vitally necessary backstage at an opening and now he was an artist in his own right and a serious artist.

Benrimo finished a great draught of wine and wiped off his mustaches and stopped his speech suddenly. He looked shyly at his friends, at the girl who was with him, and then he slowly lit a cigar and said, "I talk too much about myself. That's bad."

"Please go on," Sigmund urged.

"No. You either talk a play or you write it. You don't do both. It's you I want to talk about."

"Me?" Sigmund sighed. "There is very little new to talk about Romberg."

"I agree with Mr. Benrimo," Ann said stoutly. "I want to talk about Romberg too."

"How does it go with you, my friend?" Benrimo asked pointedly.

"The same. It never stops. It never changes. At any time of the day or night, in any month of the year, you will find Romberg doing exactly the same thing. He is writing a new show for the Shuberts."

"And how much longer do you go on working this way?" Benrimo asked.

"I've been asking him that for a long time," Ann said. "I don't understand it. You see, I don't know much about show business. But in music school we used to study the lives of artists. The way I used to understand it a man writes some music. He takes a little time. He thinks. He writes the best music he can. It takes a great deal out of him. Then, when he is finished, he rests a little bit and gives his heart a chance to slow down a little. He doesn't start in right away, without a day's rest, without a night's sleep, on something else."

"If he's working for the Shuberts, he does," Sigmund grinned.

"What are you gaining, Romberg?" Benrimo asked. "What kind of music are you writing? I don't want to hurt your feelings, but who remembers what songs you wrote six months ago? You turn out songs like a daily newspaper. Tomorrow they are dead. 'Auf Wiedersehen' is a great hit but what else is remembered?"

"And he tells me that he is getting so stale that his music bores him even when it's new," Ann said. When Sigmund looked up she continued, "Now don't you tell me to stop. This is for your own good."

"Why don't you do something about it, Romy?" Benrimo asked.

"I'll have another glass of wine."

"Let us talk seriously," Benrimo said. "You know, Romy, I

shall never forget that night when 'Blue Paradise' opened. Do you remember that opening?"

"Will I ever forget it?"

"You revealed yourself to me that night, Romy," Benrimo went on. "I've worked on a great many shows and I've seen a great many composers. Until that night I thought you were like so many of the rest—just a clever young man with a knack for putting notes together. But that night I learned something. You may never have realized it, my friend, but you disclosed yourself as an artist. That music meant a great deal to you, and for that reason alone, if there were no other, you should take an accounting of yourself."

"I leave that to my brother," Sigmund laughed. "He's the accountant in the family."

Benrimo took out a notebook and a small gold pencil. " 'A Show of Wonders,' " he said. "When did that open?"

"October 26th."

Benrimo wrote down the name and the date. "Then what?"

Sigmund smiled. In a little more than a month after that production he had written the music for 'Follow Me,' which starred Anna Held and which opened on November 29, and a week later another operetta called 'Her Soldier Boy,' which had John Charles Thomas for a star, opened with additional music by Romberg.

"Three productions for which you wrote all or part of the music in less than two months," Benrimo said. He shook his head. "Is it any wonder people say your music is not to be taken seriously?"

"I guess not," Sigmund said. Ann took his hand. "It goes back farther than that," he went on. He thought for a few moments and then he began to call off names and dates. Benrimo wrote rapidly. When he finished they looked at the list. The first show, 'The Whirl of the World,' had opened on January 10, 1914. The last, 'Her Soldier Boy,' opened on December 6, 1916. Between

those two dates he had written all or part of the music for fifteen productions; fifteen productions in twenty-two months.

"I can't believe this," Benrimo said. "Even I didn't think it was as much as this."

Sigmund sipped his wine. "And what is there to show? My song 'Auf Wiedersehen' is still sung. I think that one will last, a little while anyway. But that is the only one. What else? My music, as they say, is adequate. It fills the bill. It is pleasant and it doesn't interfere with the girls and the comedians too much. But what else could you say for it?" He held up a glass of golden wine and looked at it. "I often wonder what my father would say about this. You know, my father always tried to keep me from making a career out of music. He wanted me to become an engineer. I managed to convince him that there was music in me, music he wouldn't be too ashamed to listen to. What would he think of this? I often wonder. He would ask: 'What has happened to the dreams? Where are the operettas that are going to fill the land with melodies? Where is the music that was supposed to be Romberg music?' " He emptied his glass. "How could I explain to my father that I have become a factory writer who produces so many yards of music to fit such and such a situation? How could I tell him that I could drop out of the world tomorrow and it wouldn't delay the opening of the next production by half an hour?"

"Good," Benrimo boomed. "Good. Then this talk may do some good. This is the time to make a change. Why don't you go to J. J. and ask for a holiday?"

"There are a hundred composers on Broadway who would fall all over each other trying to get my job," Sigmund said.

"What of it," Benrimo said. "What the devil of it? That might be the best thing in the world for you."

Sigmund turned to Ann. "And what do you say? You are probably the most serious musician here tonight."

She smiled.

"That dimple," Sigmund said. "My good-luck sign. All right, my friends, you now look at the new Romberg."

"Let's drink to him," Benrimo said.

Sigmund spoke to the producer the next day. "I've become stale, J. J. My music is stale and I'm stale. I've got to break away for a little while."

The producer sat back in his chair and studied him. "For how long?" he asked.

"I don't know for how long," Romberg said. "I know that I cannot keep writing these shows one after another. It's getting so that I hate to look at blank sheets of music paper. I even hate the appearance of musical notes."

Shubert nodded. "All right, Romy," he said, not unkindly. "You have been worked pretty steadily. Suppose we release you from the next two shows."

"What does that mean? What comes next?"

"The next on schedule is the 'Passing Show.' "

Romberg grimaced. "Let's release me from that too," he said.

Shubert considered for a moment. "I'll make a bargain with you," he said finally. "This 'Passing Show' is important. De Wolfe Hopper and Irene Franklin are going to be in it. Do that show, and I'll have something more solid for you right after that."

"Such as what?"

"Well, it's a little too soon to be specific. But you know Rida Johnson Young?"

"Of course. Who doesn't?"

"Well, Mrs. Young is working on a book. It will not be a revue. It will be a play, with music. It's still in the talking stage, but I think it is going to be something unusual. There will be hardly any chorus or dancing. The music will be important and it must be good."

Romberg nodded. "All right, J. J. We'll do it your way."

The 'Passing Show of 1917' was scheduled to open on April 26 in the Winter Garden. Three weeks before opening, while the cast was rehearsing, one of the assistant stage managers ran down the center aisle of the theatre waving a newspaper. The date was April 6. The United States, which had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany on February 3, two days after the Kaiser had begun unrestricted submarine warfare, had now declared war.

Sigmund read the paper and then he handed it to someone else. He now was an enemy to his native land. His parents now were officially enemies to him. He turned and walked blindly out of the theatre.

3.

The room was too small for the people in it. The young men stood in line, some of them grinning selfconsciously, some of them plainly worried, some of them putting on a face of unconcern. There were the usual jokes, which probably were old when Caesar made his first levies.

Sigmund shifted from one foot to another. He loosened his collar in the heat. The spring morning was not hot but inside the crowded room the air was heavy with smoke and perspiration. He glanced at his watch. The youth behind him asked, "In a hurry, chum? They're going to get you fast enough." He chuckled at his own wit. Sigmund turned and smiled an acknowledgment.

"That's the army," the youth said. He was a thin, sallow-faced boy with a pointed chin. "Hurry up and wait. We're getting a taste of it right from the start. Hurry up and wait. Uncle Sam wants you, in a hurry. Take your time, you got a minute."

"You know about the army?" Sigmund asked.

"Hey, where do you come from?" asked the young man.

"I beg your pardon?"

"You don't talk like an American."

"I was born in Austria," Sigmund said.

"Austria, hey?" The young man wrinkled his forehead. "Ain't that one of the countries we're going to lick?"

"Yes."

"You mean you're going to fight against your own country?"

"This is my country now," Sigmund said gently.

The young man shook his head. "I'll be damned," he said. "I'll be damned."

The line moved up a little. He moved with it. He took out a package of cigarettes and offered one to the youth behind him. The young man took one suspiciously. Sigmund watched him and then leaned toward him and said, "They're perfectly safe. I'm really not a German spy."

The young man turned red. "Ah, hell," he said.

Presently Sigmund stood before the little desk. A middleaged woman looked at him with the expression of desperate harassment that seems to grow automatically on the face of anyone in government service; the look informed Sigmund plainly that there was no one in New York who was more overworked.

She handed him a small card, and then she asked, "Your name, please."

"Sigmund Romberg, darling."

The woman raised her eyes angrily. "That won't do you any good, young man. *I* can't keep you out of the army."

Sigmund realized that the woman had been waiting for hours for the opportunity to spring that. He sighed and gave the rest of the information. He was instructed in brisk terms how to fill in his registration card and then, with a sniff, the woman nodded him away.

"Thank you, darling," he said. He winked at her solemnly and then left the building. He now was officially registered for the

draft, and, if things moved in their usual way, in due time he would receive a notification and once again he would find himself in uniform. And it would not be the skin-tight uniform of the Royal Hungarian Army.

He left the building, humming. His heart was lighter than it had been for so long he couldn't remember. Somehow, registering for the draft removed the bad taste that he had had ever since he refused the summons of the Austro-Hungarian Consul. He had refused to return to Europe then because he had considered himself an American; but while he had cut himself off forever from his old allegiance, he had been able to do nothing to proclaim his new allegiance. Registering for the draft was that personal proclamation. He now had taken his place with the other young men of this country; when the time came, as it would come, for him to get back into uniform, he would go gladly. Not because he thought of himself as a fighting man, there was no one less inclined to the military life, but because it would permit him to show, in the only way he could at this time, how grateful he was for what his adopted land had given him.

Until the moment when he gave his name, age, residence, and so forth to the woman at the desk his sole contribution to the war effort, which was still, of course, quite young, was to compose a piece of music at the request of the commanding officer of the Navy Yard in Brooklyn. He had named this the 'Brooklyn Navy Yard March' and had brought it personally to the station.

Now however, he thought as he hurried over to the Shubert office, he was on tap. There were not a few young men about Broadway who were working the angles already, establishing official contacts and preparing future berths. For a reason he did not take time to analyze fully, he turned away from such efforts and preferred to take his chances when they came. Service in the army, he knew instinctively, would bring him a kind of peace that he had not had since the first gun had been fired.

His producer had called him that morning and had asked him to come around when he finished offering himself to Uncle Sam. Shubert had kept his word, releasing him from the next two shows. The vacation which he had sorely needed had come at a bad time. Upon this country's entering the war, all communication with his home was cut off. It had been getting worse all along, until the only way letters had been able to go back and forth had been through Switzerland, taking weeks and weeks each way. But now even this thin thread was severed.

When the time came to start work on the 'Passing Show,' he had plunged into the job with almost hysterical relief; work was still the only anodyne and this was no time to be doing nothing. The show had opened on schedule, and then he had written a few numbers for another show called 'My Lady's Glove.' And now this summons from the producer.

In with Shubert was a young woman of striking beauty. Shubert introduced her. She was Mrs. Rida Johnson Young. "Mrs. Young has written a play based on a German production," the producer said. "It is not an operetta. It is a play to which you will write music." He smiled at his composer. "Here is your chance." He picked up a bound manuscript. "Mrs. Young has written a lovely book."

"And I know that you are going to write some beautiful music," Mrs. Young interrupted impulsively.

"Take this and read it," the producer said. "Mrs. Young lives in Stamford. When you are ready to talk to her get in touch with her."

Romberg looked at the manuscript. On it was written 'Maytime.'

On this hot night in August he stood in the rear of the darkened theatre and listened to the duet, sung by Peggy Wood and Charles Purcell. He had called the song 'Will You Remember?'

"Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart,
Will you love me ever?
Will you remember this day,
When we were happy in May?"

He passed his hand over his brow. He looked up. Rida Young was standing next to him. She touched his fingers. Her eyes were wet. "It is very beautiful, Romy."

"May is a time for parting," he said.

He did not wait to be congratulated when the final curtain fell and when he knew that he had done what he had set out to do. He left the theatre and went to a small bar and waited in a dark corner. Presently his friend, Frank Tours, who had conducted the orchestra, came in. Tours hurried to the table. "We have a hit, Romy," he said exultantly. "My God, we have a hit. The audience lapped it up. What in God's name are you sitting here by yourself for? You ought to be making the rounds of the town emptying every champagne bottle in New York."

Romberg smiled. "It was not bad, was it?"

"That 'Sweetheart' number was one of the loveliest things I've heard in years," Tours said.

"Yes, it is good. I know it," Romberg said. "And look—it's impossible for me to let my father and mother know it. How wonderful it would be if they could come here and share this happiness with me. But I can't even send the music home to them." He stared away. "I can see my father opening the mail and then calling my mother excitedly, and then hurrying to the piano with the music and playing it for her." His eyes clouded and he lowered his head. "How he would love that song. That is his kind of music and how proud he would be to know that his son was capable of writing it."

Tours was silent for a moment. "The war can't last forever, Romy," he said. "They'll hear it one day."

"It's nice to think so, isn't it?"

4.

He stood a little way up on 44th Street and looked at the two theatres, almost across the street from each other. On the marquee of the Shubert Theatre was the sign: 'Maytime.' On the marquee of the 44th Street Theatre was the sign: 'Maytime.' The play was being shown simultaneously in the two theatres, almost opposite from each other, and according to the newspapers, which seemed to know everything, this was the first time such a thing had occurred on Broadway. The second company, with John Charles Thomas singing the lead, had been opened within a year after the original show and now both houses were playing to packed audiences.

Opening the second show on Broadway had been a sound venture, and would have been even if the business did not warrant it. Now, when both companies went on the road, both could, with honesty, advertise themselves as the original companies from New York. But what had started as an investment for the road had surprisingly turned into excellent business in New York.

He walked into the lobby of the Shubert Theatre. It was crowded with ticket buyers. He nodded to the man at the door and entered the theatre. He found the stage manager. "Can we have an eight-thirty opening?" he asked. The manager grinned.

"Checking again?"

"Yes."

"Eight-thirty it will be. Sharp."

Then Romberg crossed the street to the 44th Street Theatre and there he arranged for an eight-forty opening. For the rest of that evening he darted back and forth across the street comparing the two shows. He caught one scene in the Shubert Theatre and then got across to the 44th Street Theatre to catch the same scene when it appeared there.

There was no question about it. 'Maytime' was one of the great

successes of the year, and, if the newspapers were not incorrect, was making a kind of theatrical history in appearing on two stages at the same time. It should have brought vast satisfaction to its composer, and yet, oddly, it brought more heartache to him than anything he had done before.

He had known that in the minds of the critics, of the Broadway sages, of the men who gathered together in the theatrical restaurants and discussed and solved all the Broadway questions, he was firmly established as a typical Winter Garden revue writer. So long as he had remained in that category, no one had bothered to criticize him too harshly. He was not expected to do too much and was, in fact, not regarded as worthy of attack. 'The Blue Paradise,' with its haunting 'Auf Wiedersehen,' which was still being sung, had been a puzzler, but 'Maytime' had been a distinct shock. It was difficult for the men, with their supply of labels to paste neatly on everyone and everything, to explain how Romberg, who had written the quite shallow music for the endless revues, was the same man who turned out the genuinely beautiful score for this production.

The talk around town was a kind of compliment, Rida Young had told him. "It's the way Broadway understands compliments," she had said. "It's proof that you're big enough to be attacked and it's the sincerest kind of flattery, Broadway style. You have the smart boys all confused and they don't like that and they're striking out the only way they know how."

It had not helped that less than two weeks after 'Maytime' had opened originally that Romberg had been assigned to do another Winter Garden show called 'Doing Our Bit' which had presented that sterling theatrical personality, James J. Corbett, nor had it helped that before 'Doing Our Bit' opened he already was at work on another revue called 'Over the Top,' even though that had Fred and Adele Astaire dancing in it.

The rapidity with which these flimsy productions followed

'Maytime' gave support to the indictment that Romberg was facile enough and a good boy in his line, but essentially trivial in his musical conceptions. He was a man who could turn out his music easily, at a moment's notice. But how did that jibe with 'Maytime'?

"It makes them sore as boils," Rida had chuckled. "You ought to be amused by it."

He looked at her and tried for a smile. "It is very amusing," he said.

"Romy," she said swiftly. "Don't let them get you. You have got the talent and you know it and whenever you have had a chance to prove it you've done so, and done so beautifully. You're in a brutal profession, and you'll have to fight these people all the time, from now on. Their names and their faces will change, but they'll be the same people, no matter what you do or when you do it."

When he wrote the music for Al Jolson's third show, 'Sinbad,' and when 'Sinbad' proved to be one of the outstanding successes in the mammy-singer's career, the critics were happy again. 'Maytime' was still a favorite in New York, but when 'Sinbad' opened the critics, both official and unofficial, reported with a kind of relief that its music was wonderful, as though by praising Romberg for this kind of music they were proving their point, that he was not to be considered any more seriously.

He pleaded with his producers to allow him to work on an original operetta, something with which he could once and for all confound his critics and prove what he could do. He was informed this was impossible: there were three big revues on schedule and there was no way of escaping them.

He was assisted at this point by an authority greater than that exercised even by the Messrs. Shubert. He was invited by the United States Government, in the last part of February, 1918, to step into a somewhat larger production. He was given free trans-

portation to Yaphank, Long Island, where another Broadway character named Irving Berlin already was stationed, and there he was inducted into the army. When personnel officers learned he spoke Hungarian and German fluently and could understand and speak Serbian, he was assigned to Military Intelligence, and placed in a unit whose mission was to counteract possible enemy sabotage on the East Coast. He embraced his duties with a fervent relief.

XII

"He can only be an American," the thin man with the sunken eyes said to his friend. His friend, who at one time had been fat but whose flesh now hung from his cheeks in a loose pouch, clung to the shiny, worn briefcase which marked the professional man, and nodded curtly. "I do not know it has happened," the skinny man went on. "But the money seems all to have gone to America. It is as though someone lifted Europe up a little and the gold slid across the ocean."

"But what can they buy with their money?" the former fat man asked complacently. "Only fancy bathrooms in ugly homes. Still, it is to be regretted. Just conceive what could be done in Europe with that money."

"No culture," the thin man said in a sepulchral voice.

"Of course, no culture. Barbarians. That is why they won the war. Who can match himself against savages?"

The train clattered along. Sigmund kept his face toward the window to hide the smile on his lips. The men were speaking in German and of course they were referring to him. He turned toward them. Instantly they smiled broadly. He took out a package of American cigarettes and offered them to the men. Nodding, their eyes sparkling, the men accepted a cigarette each

and Sigmund, still without speaking, held out a match for them.

The former fat man sucked in the smoke greedily. Then he held the cigarette in front of him. Slowly, feeling for each word, he said, in English, "American cigarette, good cigarette."

Sigmund nodded.

"Good, good, good," the thin man said.

Without changing his happy expression, the man with the attache case said to his friend, "These swine have cigarettes like this to smoke all the time."

"Keep smiling," the thin man said. "Perhaps he will offer us another."

The two men kept pleasant faces toward him. For three-quarters of an hour they faced each other and smiled, and Sigmund offered them cigarettes again and they accepted them with loud expressions of gratitude. Then the men arrived at their destination. They pulled battered valises from the rack as the train slowed in the station.

"Be careful, my friends," Sigmund remarked in German. "Those bags of yours do not look as though they could stand much more punishment."

The man who once was fat nodded. "It is true. But what can you do these days? And we used to make such excellent leather goods." Then he stopped suddenly and looked at Sigmund, his eyes opening wide. "You speak German," he said.

"Yes, my friend, I was born not two hours ride away from here."

The two men turned a furious red. "You should have informed us that you speak German," the thin man said. "It was rude of you to allow us to talk."

"I did not know you well enough to interrupt," Sigmund said sweetly.

The compartment door was opened. The men strode past him, dragging their valises. He said goodbye pleasantly and waved

to them but they walked away without a word. He stretched his legs on the platform and then climbed back into the compartment again and soon the train was moving and he stared from the window, which obviously had not been washed since before the war. There was nothing changed and yet so much had been changed.

The last few days had passed as though in a dream. From the moment he had disembarked in Cherbourg he felt that he was walking in an old and familiar reverie, and that soon he would awaken in his apartment in Manhattan. How small the French railroad cars had seemed! They were almost like toys. And how courteous the French customs inspectors, how happy to see visitors from America again after the long years of the war.

He remained in Paris only long enough to make connections and then boarded the Orient Express to Vienna. He did not stay at all in Vienna, saving that for later, but changed to another train for Osiek. The farther into what had formerly been Austria-Hungary, but which now was something else altogether, he proceeded the more he saw the stigma of defeat. It was as though everyone were ashamed. He had to look twice to believe he actually was in Vienna. Even without leaving the station he could see the signs.

The conductor, shabby, unshaven, opened the door to the compartment and looked in. His voice was courteous but his face revealed what he thought of rich Americans. "Osiek," he said. He took a final look at the young American, in the faultless American-made suit, the shined and untorn shoes, the homburg creased only where it should be creased, the several excellent leather bags. "Osiek," he repeated and walked away.

Now Sigmund began to tremble. Osiek, Osiek. He repeated the name again and again. It was ten years, ten full years, in which the world had changed. The train now seemed to crawl so pitifully slowly. Osiek. The blood throbbed in his temples. He felt an al-

most overwhelming desire to weep. Then the train rolled into the station and the door was opened and he stepped down. The tears streamed down his cheeks and he did not attempt to hold them back. "Mother," he said. "Mother. Father." Then he rushed to them.

2.

"And that is how it is," Adam Romberg said. "The Gutmann empire has been broken up, just as the Habsburg Empire. The Baron, the old Baron, died during the war, and now his offices and factories are in different countries. Nobody seems to know what has happened to Ernoe. He is somewhere in Vienna but he keeps to himself. His mother hardly ever sees him and she is sick too. We were very busy here during the war making chemicals, and after the Empire collapsed all of Croatia was taken over by the Allied control. I'm still supposed to be the manager here but it is a position of name only. I do nothing but wait." He shrugged. "But enough of all that. It is of you we wish to hear. You are the one who has the news."

They were seated in the familiar old living room, and Sigmund, trying hard to listen carefully to his father, found himself constantly drifting into the past. How well he knew everything in that room! He felt like a small boy again and he expected almost at any moment to hear his brother Hugo charge into the room breathlessly.

How his father had aged! Adam Romberg now was seventy-five and the sandy mustache was white and the face was lined and seemed to have shrunk. His mother watched over the old man as though he were made of fragile china.

"The 'Maytime' music is good," Adam Romberg said. "Your mother wrote to you, of course, that I was able to obtain the music from Vienna. The song 'Will You Remember?' has a touch in it,

a touch such as 'Auf Wiedersehen' has. The other music, from the revues, that you sent to me . . ." He looked up shyly. "Perhaps it is just that I do not understand it. Surely it must be good to be presented in New York."

Sigmund shook his head. "It is not very good."

"But it is required that you write it?"

"It *was* required," Sigmund said.

"You mean that your producers are going to allow you to write more serious things?" Adam asked.

Sigmund grinned. "I have been waiting for this moment. This is a surprise I have for you. Yes, my producers are going to allow me to write more serious things. And the reason for that is that I am now my own producer. I have left the Shuberts."

He began the story from the beginning, from the time he went into the army. It turned out that he had not entirely cut himself off from his old work, because Washington had ordered that civilian and military morale must be kept up, and he was given some time to write music. Additionally he was sent from time to time to entertain at various camps.

But the unchanging rhythm of producing music for the Shuberts had been broken. He had time to think, while he was in uniform, and to look upon his career as of that moment, with a new perspective. For a long while he had thought that he might one day start on a career as an independent producer, so that he would be able to write the kind of music he wanted to write, and upon being discharged from the army he knew that the time had come to make the break. He had written a couple of shows for the Shuberts, and as he worked on them he was more and more convinced that if he ever wanted to lift himself to the heights he thought he could reach, he had to make his gamble before it was too late.

It was not an easy decision. His salary from the Shuberts was higher than ever, and it was secure. He had very little reserve

cash and if his venture flopped he would be left high and dry. The Shuberts would undoubtedly have another staff composer by then and he would have nothing. Nevertheless, he took his leave from the Shubert organization and joined hands with a man named Max Wilner, forming the firm of Wilner and Romberg.

"That was a big step," Adam said gravely.

"Yes," his son replied. "But I had a piece of luck. There is a music-publishing firm in New York called M. Witmark and Sons. Isidore Witmark likes my music and he wanted to sign a long-term contract with me for all my future music. He agreed to give me a bonus upon signing the papers and then a guaranteed drawing account against future earnings. It seemed as though luck were smiling upon me and of course I signed up with him."

"But how could you leave your business when you just started it and come back here to Europe?" his father asked.

"What could have kept me away once it was possible to get here?" Sigmund asked. "Things are going smoothly back in New York. That is the biggest surprise of all." He smiled tenderly at his mother and took her hand between his. "Mother, do you remember, many years ago, you wrote a little story which appeared in a Viennese newspaper, the *Neue Freie Presse,* I think. It was a story about a little boy who was stolen by gypsies in Hungary and who was found many years later when he remembered a song his mother had sung to him as a child."

Mrs. Romberg nodded slowly. "Yes, I remember that story."

"Well, I remembered it too, and I thought that it might be a good story for our first independent production. I got one of the finest writers in New York, a man named Frederick Arnold Kummer, and I told him the story as I remembered it, and he is using that as the basis of our production."

"My little story?" his mother asked in disbelief.

"Yes, my sweetheart, your little story."

Mrs. Romberg shook her head. "You are teasing me."

Her son kissed her. "No, I am not teasing you. It is true. And what better luck can I have than to start out on my own for the first time with a story written by you!" He began to pace up and down the room. "We are going to try to do something new," he said with some excitement. "It will be a musical, of course, but the leading role, the mother, will be played by a great New York dramatic actress, a woman named Julia Deane."

"A dramatic actress in an operetta?" Adam asked. "Will that work out?"

"We hope so," Sigmund said. "At least it will cause enough talk." Then he said: "But that is enough now about my career. I have many things to tell you about Hugo. Your younger son is a very successful professional man."

After a while Adam closed his eyes. Mrs. Romberg immediately was at his side, saying, "Adam, this has been very exciting for you, but you must take some rest."

His father nodded wearily. "My mind stays clear, my son, but the flesh has not refused the years. I am a tired old man and now must sleep often, as I did, no doubt, when I was a baby. You will excuse me and not think me discourteous."

"Of course, Father," Sigmund said, biting his lip.

When his father was in bed, Mrs. Romberg returned and they resumed their talking, and Sigmund disclosed his chief reason for coming to Belisce. "I want to bring you and Father back to New York with me. There is nothing to keep you here now. Your sons are in New York. We want to make a home for you there and be with you from now on."

For a moment Mrs. Romberg's eyes lighted and then she sighed and shook her head. "It is a beautiful thought, Sigmund, but it can never be."

"Why not? Father said before that he has virtually retired from business. There is nothing to keep you here."

"It is a lovely dream." Her eyes were soft as she looked at her

son. "But I am afraid it would kill your father. He is an old man now, Sigmund, and to transplant him would mean his death. Here he lived and here he will die. Don't mention it to him because he would feel it would displease you to have to refuse. But if he left here I doubt that he would reach America alive."

"Is he that ill?"

"No. He is not ill. He is very old. Change exhausts him. Things have to go along in a routine manner. The least little difference tires him so that he has to go to bed. Your coming here kept him in bed day after day before you arrived. The doctor advised against his going to Osiek to meet you, but that he would not consider. Can you imagine what a trip half around the world would do to him?" She stood up. "And I am not a young woman either. I am spent too. I must lie down or I shall not be able to remain awake this evening." She walked over to him and pressed his head to her. "It is good to see you, Sigmund. For a long, long while I lived with the fear that I would never see either of my sons again. But it appears that God is still kind, even to us, even to us."

3.

Vienna now was a tawdry old woman and if he had not seen and recognized the buildings and the streets he would not have believed he was there. There was no Empire now and Vienna was a head too big for its body; what was left of Austria could hardly contain it.

He had spent four weeks in Belisce and for the time being was forced to abandon his idea of bringing his parents to New York. He had received a stream of cables from New York informing him that Kummer had finished the book and that he was needed now for his part in the show. Before he left Belisce he was able to delight his father's heart. On a short trip to Osiek he had dis-

covered, quite by accident, that the old military band from the city had been kept more or less intact in Djakovar, the seat of the Bishop Strosmayer. He had managed to collect some fifty members of the old organization and brought them to Belisce.

Saying nothing to his father, he had rehearsed the men for two days, and then gave a concert for his father and their friends in the great hall of the Gutmann chateau. It was an all-Romberg concert, the first program made up entirely of his own music ever to be played. He never would forget the radiance on his father's face.

Then he had given his mother a considerable sum of money which he insisted was a 'royalty' for the use of her story, and he had left Belisce. Now he strolled through the streets of Vienna, and tried to make himself believe this was the city he had known ten years before. There were no marks of the war; buildings were intact; there was no rubble. But the destruction was deeper.

He went to the opera. He remembered the orchestra before the war, the white ties and tails; now there was a group of unhappy, half-starved men in patched sack-suits, playing morosely. He was told that during the winter the orchestra had had to play with overcoats on because of lack of fuel.

Transportation was almost at a standstill in the city. Streetcars broke down from neglect and were left standing where they ceased to function, sometimes for hours, others piling up behind them. The old fiacres were still there, although the horses which pulled them were so bony they seemed ready to drop in their tracks.

Everywhere, in the new republican city, the old signs of the Habsburgs had been removed assiduously. Officers, who had contributed so much to the color of the cafes in their dress uniforms, now wore dirty field-gray, and wore their uniforms even now when there was no army because there was nothing else for them to wear. Inflation had swept the country.

He went from place to place. He sought old friends. This one

had been killed in action. That one was still a prisoner somewhere. That one simply disappeared. He scrutinized old coffee houses, looking for a familiar face. He felt a kind of animosity everywhere. He was dressed too well and he had too much money. Even when he spoke German the animosity was there. It was thought he undoubtedly had made a fortune out of the war in Vienna.

For more than a week he searched fruitlessly for Mariska. He went to every address he had for her. She had left no traces. He had not heard from her for long before the war and now it was as though she had simply disappeared. He looked for Karczag but he had died. His son, Laczi, was also dead, killed in the war.

Daily the cables arrived, urging that he hasten home. Kummer suggested that, since there was an important role for a British comedian in the script, he return to New York by way of London and try to engage Tom McNaughton, a leading English actor, for the part. He cabled back each day that he would leave soon, and then he continued his search. It was not possible for him to depart from Vienna without finding something about Mariska and Ernoe. And the city haunted him as well. He could not leave it. Dreary, dirty, broken, it still held him, as it always had held him, and he could not tear himself away.

He entered a well-remembered gastube. The headwaiter, dazzled by his appearance, rushed up and said in broken English, "Welcome to the gentleman." He did not attempt to reply in German. He had found it better to be considered an American tourist rather than a possible Viennese black-marketeer, and in Vienna at that time only speculators could dress as he did. He followed the waiter to a table and then he paused. He cut across the room and stood in front of a little table at which a young man

was seated before a half-emptied bottle of wine. "Ernoe," he said softly.

The young man waited long before he raised his head. "Romy," he said. "Romy, my God." He stood up. "What brings you to this city of death?" He looked at his friend. "Let me embrace you," he said. "Let me embrace you!"

For two hours they sat and talked and drank bad wine and after they had exchanged experiences Sigmund asked, "Where is Mariska?"

Ernoe picked up Sigmund's pack of American cigarettes and slowly extracted one. He rolled the cigarette lightly around in his fingers for a moment or two, and then said, "You have been wanting to ask that question from the moment we met, but you thought you were required to listen to the ramblings of your old friend first." He looked up, his tired, too-old face softened with a smile. "Romy," he said. "Old Romy. You were smart and you were lucky and I'll tell you this: I thought of you often the last few years and I thought that the devil must be saving you for something special. You'll write music, Romy, better music than you've written. There has to be a reason."

"And Mariska?"

"Do you remember a man named Janos Szabados? He was in your regiment?"

"Of course I remember Szabados," Sigmund said impatiently.

"How romantic it could have been," Ernoe mused, half to himself. "If it were in one of your operettas, for instance, you could have the hero return to Vienna after the war and there he would find his sweetheart waiting for him, unchanged, except that she would be more beautiful than ever, of course. They would fall into each other's arms for the last curtain. How beautiful it would be."

"Ernoe," he pleaded.

"But instead the war was a long war and the girl didn't stay

the same age but got a little older and perhaps a little fatter, even with the lack of food, and after a while the night clubs weren't so prosperous and she couldn't find work. You couldn't have it that way in an operetta." He looked up suddenly. "So she marries the old friend. Tell me, Romy, how often did your friend Janos see Mariska when you were in Vienna?"

Sigmund stared in disbelief. "Janos and Mariska? Ernoe, you must be joking?"

"It was in '16, I think," Ernoe said, an old cynical tone returning to his voice. "Janos came back here on a leave. He had a wound. A perfectly wonderful wound. I think an Italian bullet scratched him on the finger. Mariska was still singing in a club. They got together. I am quite certain, my friend, that the first few times they spoke only of you, of the missing link in the chain. Mariska, as I have said, was wearing out a little. Let me be frank, my old friend. Vienna was that kind of a city during the war. Mariska was getting a little brown around the edges. But Szabados always was an idealist. One day they got married. That's all there is to it."

"Ernoe, this is almost impossible to believe."

"That Mariska got married? Romy, my friend, you live in an operetta world. Why shouldn't Mariska get married? You never asked her not to."

"But Mariska and Szabados?" He wiped his forehead. "Those two . . ."

"I will finish the story for you, my friend. They were married. Janos soon has to return to his regiment. Mariska soon has a baby. Final curtain. Now, epilogue. Three months ago I have to go to Budapest on business."

"Yes?"

"Janos Szabados is now a politician. All Hungarians in Budapest are politicians. He is a rising young man. He is a war veteran. He has been wounded, you remember, and now they forget it was

only a finger. He makes great speeches and is always in the papers. And Mariska? She has another child on the way and she is fat. Really fat this time. You must face it. Good rich Hungarian food. She is a housewife and she is proud of her husband and she is fat and when he comes home from his work each day I do not doubt that she welcomes him with Hungarian music. I know. I was invited there for dinner. After dinner Mariska sang. You should have seen the tableau. Szabados, slippers and curved pipe. Mariska six months gone with child. Old gypsy songs." He looked closely at his friend. "I think you should have another drink," he said. "You look as though you needed it badly."

"Mariska and Janos," he said. Suddenly he queried, "Ernoe, when is the next train to Budapest? We must go there, both of us, and wish our old friends happiness!"

XIII

He looked around the office slowly. "Looks just the same," he said. He sat down heavily. "I'm back, J. J. You've probably been expecting me to show up with my hat in hand."

"I was sorry to hear your firm went under, Romy," the producer said. "Believe me. I was rooting for you."

"Thanks."

"I saw your first show, you know. 'Magic Melody.' It was a wonderful show in some ways, a wonderful show. But perhaps it was ahead of its time. Or perhaps it was that you just can't mix musical comedy and drama. The public won't take both at once." Shubert leaned forward. "I've learned something in these long years, Romy. When people go to the theatre they go with the intention of satisfying a mood. They want musical comedy for laughs and girls or operettas for music and romance or straight dramas or comedies. You can't confuse them. You can't mix up a brew that's half-drama and half-musical comedy. They become bewildered instead of bewitched. They can't take the shock of the sudden changes. There are exceptions but they don't happen very often. This is a crazy business but there are rules."

"Hindsight is always very illuminating," Romberg said.

"You were starting a new firm. You wanted to start with a bang, with a great novelty. You were putting the fortunes of your firm ahead of your own desires as a composer. It didn't work. That show you did with Pat Rooney and Marion Bent. 'Love Birds.' That was something else again. If you want to do that sort of thing why did you ever leave me?"

"You know that isn't what I want to do," Romberg said.

"So now it is all dissolved?" Shubert asked.

"It's all dissolved."

"And Wilner has gone into bankruptcy."

"Yes."

"But not you?"

"No."

"You intend to pay off the firm's debts?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, what are we waiting for? I've got work for you to do." Shubert leaned back and smiled broadly. "After being your own boss for almost two years do you think you can work for someone else again."

"What is it," Romberg said. "Another revue?"

"No, my friend, this is something closer to your style. An operetta. An operetta about a man named Franz Schubert. No relation."

"You've got that show in rehearsal already," Romberg said.

"Yes, we have 'Blossom Time' in rehearsal." The producer stood up and walked around his desk. He leaned forward. "But it's very weak in one place, the score. You could fix that."

"Let me have a look at it."

"I have it right here." He handed the book to Romberg. "I'm glad to have you back, Romy."

Romberg nodded. He left the office. After two years, back in the same stable. He got into a cab and gave his address to the driver and leaned back in the seat and lit a cigarette. And the

firm of Wilner and Romberg, which had started out with such high hopes. *Kaputt.*

When he had returned from Vienna, disappointed at not being able to bring his parents with him, he had started work on 'The Magic Melody.' It never quite came off. It was a critical success; the professionals had written glowingly of the excellence of the score and the general maturity of the entire conception. But the public never wholly accepted it. It ran for almost seven months in New York and then went on the road. The actors' strike just before its opening hadn't helped and when the show was on the road there was a general railroad strike which was not of assistance either. Perhaps the formula was wrong. Perhaps you couldn't stir drama into a music sauce. He had tried to start the new firm off with a bang, sacrificing his fundamental desire to write operetta. But the bang misfired and the Rooney-Brent thing was just froth to recoup. And now with his former partner a voluntary bankrupt, he was committed, through a stubborn pride, to pay off the money the dissolved firm borrowed from the bank.

In his apartment he began to read the book of 'Blossom Time.' If he took on the job he would have to work fast. The production was in rehearsal and under the new Actors' Equity contract could not be prolonged for more than five weeks.

The original show of 'Blossom Time' had been a great success abroad under the title of *'Das Drei Maedelhaus,'* and the story had been adapted, with its original music, for the American stage by a talented woman named Dorothy Donnelly, a former actress who had turned writer. It was the old 'Cyrano de Bergerac' story, played somewhat in reverse. Schubert, a meek, retiring youth, as he was in life, falls in love with a rich girl. Because the girl loves his music, he thinks that he can win her with it. He writes a love song and asks his best friend, Baron Shoeber, to sing it to her. He plays the piano and the handsome baron sings the love song, but instead of realizing the music was written by Schubert

the girl, Mitzi, can only hear the baron singing it, and rushes into his arms and confesses her love. In the last act, Schubert, a sick, heartbroken man, realizes that he can never win the girl and tells the lovers that he is happy he brought them together. For him, he said, his music provides its own consolation.

There were some things about the show that appealed to Romberg very much. There was no chorus. The show was played and sung by a cast of twenty-eight persons. He could understand with what pleasure the Viennese must have listened to the music, all of it based on Schubert's own music, during the dark days that followed the war. Even now, two years since he had been in Vienna, he could still remember the misery in the city. He could close his eyes, now, and imagine himself in one of the little unheated Viennese theatres, the drab, hungry people, the orchestra, half-starved, dressed in patched clothing, all creating in unhappy surroundings a glorious memory of a better time.

'Blossom Time' in many respects might be considered a natural for him. And yet there was a serious objection, from his viewpoint. The original score had been based on Schubert's own music, and Romberg insisted that any additions and modifications should also have to come out of Schubert's themes.

Confused and despondent, he went to see his old friend, Witmark, his music publisher, who through all the lean years kept to his bargain and had continued the drawing account as provided for in their contract.

"What shall I do?" he asked him. "I know this music so well. I remember back in Vienna before the war when I went to school. We used to go to the home of Alfred Gruenfeld, the pianist, on Sunday mornings and he would play Schubert's music until I think I knew it by heart. But how can I go into this thing? How can I ride along on a dead man's genius?"

"Of course it will be stated that the music is Schubert's, and only adapted by you," Witmark said.

"Certainly," Romberg replied. "There is no question about that. The program will clearly state the music is by Franz Schubert. But even so. If it is a success can you imagine what I will be exposed to? I can hear the smart boys now. 'Making money out of a dead man.' I can foresee right now that someone will figure out on pencil and paper that Romberg is making more money out of Schubert's music in one week than Schubert himself made out of his music in his entire life. It will make a nice Sunday newspaper feature." He rose nervously and began to pace up and down. "The idea could be developed endlessly. If Romberg can't write his own music he uses the music of Franz Schubert. Isidore, they could crucify me!"

"Sit down, Romy," the publisher said quietly.

"And the score the show has now. It is almost pitiful. If they are going to use Schubert's music why didn't they do a real job of it? He has music that could lift people out of their seats. But it isn't in the show. Not now."

"Sit down, Romy," Witmark repeated. When Romberg finally lowered himself into a chair, Witmark went on. "Let us forget about what the Broadway experts will say for the moment. Let us look into your affairs."

"Lord," Romberg sighed.

"You have just dissolved your firm," Witmark said, "and you have elected to meet your obligations. Put $30,000 down to start with. All right. You are sending quite a sizable sum to your parents in Europe. You wish to continue that. Right?"

"Of course. And I owe you about $20,000. I'm not forgetting that," Romberg said.

"I didn't bring that up," Witmark said.

"No, but it's there. I've drawn that much from you and it has to be paid. With music."

"You do not have very much choice, Romy," the publisher

said. "This show can be a great success and it can make a small fortune for you."

"At what a price," Romberg said bitterly.

Witmark said nothing for a few moments, and then he said, "Romy, there is no one, no one at all, who has more faith in you than I have. I *know* that one day you will write the music that is in you. But right now you have to take on this assignment. Like it or not, you'll have to do it. The hell with what the wise guys will say. The world has been full of wise guys since the start of time. They can't hurt you, not if you won't let them."

Romberg nodded. "I knew from the beginning that I would have to take this on."

He went back to Shubert. "I'll do the show," he said shortly.

"Good. Good, Romy, good."

"There is one condition. I must start from scratch. I want to throw out the entire score as it stands now. I'll adapt Schubert's music myself. At least the choice of his music can be my own."

"Can you do this in four and a half weeks?"

"Yes."

"All right, Romy. Go ahead."

In the quiet of his own apartment he took stock of the situation. He decided that there were four of Schubert's works that were most popular in this country: The 'Unfinished Symphony,' 'Ave Maria,' the 'Serenade,' and the 'March Militaire.' These he would use. For the great theme waltz of the show he took part of the symphony, a part from another Schubert melody, and added a connecting theme of his own composition. In the second act Schubert, still in love with Mitzi, builds a symphony to symbolize their love, and in the third act, when he realizes he has lost her, he promises never to finish the symphony. Finally he is seen too sick to attend the premiere of the never-to-be finished symphony

in Vienna, and while in this condition gets his inspiration for the immortal 'Ave Maria.'

'Blossom Time' opened in Atlantic City in May, 1921, and before the final curtain had fallen everyone concerned with the production knew it was destined to be a success. Not even the most optimistic, however, had any conception of how great that success was to be. Opening in New York the following September 29, it became so popular that within a few months four road companies were organized, something without precedent. At the Atlantic City opening, Dorothy Donnelly, who had proved a wonderful person to work with, told him everyone was saying the show would live for years to come. "J. J. says they will be singing revivals of 'Blossom Time,' twenty years from now," she said.

"And why not?" Romberg asked bitterly. "Franz Schubert's music has lasted for almost a century now. Why shouldn't it last for another twenty years?"

Her face twisted with compassion. "I know what doing this show has meant to you," she said softly. "But there will be other shows. Your own. I know it. Believe me when I say I know it." She smiled. "Perhaps we can do them together."

2.

"All right, children, let's try it again," Jolson said.

"Let's go and get a drink somewhere," Atteridge countered.

"Sense," Buddy de Sylva said. "Sense from a writer."

"Work," Jolson said. "Work, children."

"First Simon Legree I ever knew in blackface," Romberg grumbled. He sat down to the piano. "All right, Caruso," he said to Jolson. "Give. Give good and give quick."

The four men were bearded, sunburned, and in open shirts and dirty flannels. They were in a small cabin near the Saranac Inn in the Adirondacks. They might have been there for any purpose

except perhaps the real purpose: to fashion a new show for the great comedian, scheduled to open a few weeks thence. The four men had retired to the little cabin in the mountains and had made a pact not to shave until the entire show, book, lyrics, music, to the last song and last gag, was finished.

They had not chosen their location without due thought. Prohibition reigned reasonably supreme in the United States; but Montreal was a scant three hours by fast car. When inspiration needed wetting-down they headed for the border. But at that the four men worked skillfully and tirelessly, and in the tiny cabin, with its hired piano, a Broadway production was being hammered out.

They worked through the sunny morning, rested for a while, and then resumed in the afternoon. Jolson remarked casually, "I forgot to tell you, children, but I met some people I know at the Inn. They're coming over this evening to hear some of our stuff." He grinned at the dismay on his friends' faces. "It's all right, children, they know we're show people and they know we're crazy. It doesn't matter how we look."

"They'll know we're crazy now, all right," Atteridge said. "Are we going to shave and look halfway human?"

"Remember the pact," Romberg said stoutly.

"I know," the writer said. "But look at ourselves."

"Let's not," de Sylva said. "We've been doing that for too long now."

"I say this is an emergency and we ought to shave and clean up," Atteridge insisted.

"Remember the pact," Romberg repeated. "Until the last song is finished."

"Well, I'm going to take a bath anyway," Atteridge said.

"A bath, all right," Romberg agreed. "But no shave." He rubbed his bewhiskered face. "I'm getting to like this. Maybe I'll let it stay."

"That is one way of convincing the world you are a genius," Atteridge said pointedly.

"Thank you, my friend," Romberg said equably.

"All right, children," Jolson boomed. "Recess is over. Back to our work."

The visitors arrived shortly after eight o'clock. There were seven or eight of them. The men were dressed flawlessly in smart resort clothing. The women were cool and fashionable. The four theatrical men looked worse than ever. One of the young ladies, a tall and attractive woman with light hair and a beautiful creamy complexion, surveyed the bearded quartet. Her eyes twinkled as she gravely remarked, "I've often wondered how men of genius operated. Now I know." She looked at Romberg. "Which one are you?"

He bowed low. "Sigmund Romberg, lady."

"You write music," she said.

"And your name?"

"Lillian Harris."

"Are you in show business?"

"Never mind the flattery," she said. "No." She looked at the four friends again. "Tell me, Mr. Romberg, why the beards?"

"You've heard how mossy our shows are," Jolson said.

"I see," she said. Her voice was cool and crisp. "Well, if it makes you all happy. . . . Do you always raise a beard when you write your music, Mr. Romberg?"

"No," Jolson said quickly. "But he's tried everything else. Somehow he thinks he can find the formula to write songs. He thinks this may be it."

Romberg grinned and rubbed his chin. He suddenly felt unkempt. Miss Harris looked so exquisitely cool. His beard was a childish thing, he thought. He sat down to the piano to cover his confusion. He began to play the music for the show and Jolson

sang along. The comedian sang expertly, as usual, and Romberg was certain the music was no worse than other music of its type he had written for a dozen or more shows, but playing, listening to Jolson, watching Miss Harris, it seemed flat to him. The young woman, seated demurely in one of the rickety chairs, her hands folded calmly in her lap, appeared almost indifferent. He had a sudden yearning for her to like his music.

When Jolson and he were finished the guests applauded. He noticed she applauded too, but, it seemed to him, much less enthusiastically than the others. Decidedly, he thought, she was a cool one.

At midnight the guests rose. Jolson said that he would walk them back to the Inn. Romberg said instantly, "I'd like a little air too. I'll go along with you."

He managed to get alongside Miss Harris. They walked slowly, and presently the others were ahead of them. The night was warm and there was the sweet smell of the country in the air. He wanted to talk to her; he wanted really to talk, not to make idle conversation, but to talk to her, as though they had known each other for a much longer time. But he was baffled. It was idiotic when he thought about it. For years now he had been in show business and had been on easy and familiar terms with all kinds of women. He could have talked without restraint to great theatrical stars, to women writers, to beautiful singers or dancers. Women, of all kinds, were certainly no novelty. But he walked along in the semi-darkness of the bright night with this quiet, collected young woman, and he wanted to speak to her and he didn't know where to start.

When they reached the Inn the others were not in sight. "Are you tired?" he asked.

"Not particularly."

"Would you like to sit and talk for a little while?"

He could not make out her expression. After a little while she said, courteously, "If you like."

They found two chairs on the lawn. They sat silently for several minutes. She made no attempt to open the conversation. It was a new experience for him. Usually young and beautiful women were quite eager to become friendly with a man who had so much influence in a potent theatrical organization.

"Who are you?" he asked at last. "Where do you come from?"

"Washington," she said.

"Do you have anything to do with the theatre?"

"No, Mr. Romberg. I am what is known among you people as a non-professional woman."

"You do like the theatre, though?" It was important, quite important, that she like the theatre.

"Yes, I like to see a good show," she said. Then, with a half-smile he could not see, she continued, "And you want to know if I have ever seen any of your shows, and if so, what I think of them."

He lit a cigarette. "You make everything so easy, Miss Harris," he murmured.

"What is the name of this new show?" she asked in her cool voice.

" 'Bombo,' " he said.

" 'Bombo,' " she repeated. "And do you enjoy writing music for shows called 'Bombo'?"

He looked at her suddenly. "What do you mean, Miss Harris?"

"Nothing," she said. And it was gone. "Nothing at all. With Mr. Jolson in it it undoubtedly will be a great success."

"Please," he said. "What did you mean?"

"Do you remember a song you once wrote, called 'Will You Remember'?"

"Of course. It was in 'Maytime.' "

"That was a very beautiful song, Mr. Romberg," she said.

"Yes."

"I'm getting a little tired," she said. "I think I'd better go up."

He said, "Not yet, please. What are you trying to tell me?"

"*I.* Trying to tell *you* anything." She smiled faintly. "I know nothing about the theatre, Mr. Romberg."

"You're trying to tell me I'm wasting my time on trivial revues," he said.

"Am I?"

"Please," he said, suddenly earnest. "It is quite important. Please don't walk your voice away again. Please."

"Mr. Romberg, you are one of the most successful young music writers on Broadway, I've heard. I wouldn't dream of criticizing."

Then he said slowly, "You may be making a mistake."

She turned abruptly toward him. "Even in 'Blossom Time,' even in that," she said and now the coolness was gone from her voice. "Yes, I saw it. I happened to be in Atlantic City and some friends had some tickets and asked me to go. I thought it would be a waste of time to spend a lovely spring evening in a stuffy theatre but I went anyway. And I shall never forget it. Oh, I know it was Schubert's music, but you did such fine things with it. Why 'Bombo'? And what comes after 'Bombo'? Some more dressed-up vaudeville?" Then, as though aghast at what she had said, she whispered, "I'm sorry Mr. Romberg. Really it is none of my business and I must go on up." She half-rose from the chair.

"Just a little while longer," he said quietly, and as she sat down again he knew that he now could talk to her.

They spoke through the night hours. He told her about his youth and about Vienna and she listened silently, but it was a different silence and he could feel it and he could not stop. Once

he paused and said, "It's not just talking about myself, please understand that." She nodded and urged him on.

When he told her about his feelings when he was offered the chance to do 'Blossom Time' her hand moved toward him and touched him lightly on the wrist and he took it and kissed it. "What that must have done to you," she whispered. "How little one ever knows."

"But there is a bright side," he said, suddenly eager. "When I was a student in Vienna there was a show there that we all saw and loved and cried over. It was called 'Old Heidelberg.' It was a typically European thing, no music, you understand, straight drama. It was about students at Heidelberg University and about a prince who studies there incognito, and while the prince is there he falls in love with a beautiful little barmaid at a small beer tavern. The girl falls in love with him too, but he has to leave her and return to his proper station. It was quite a tender and tragic little play and I remember seeing it several times in Vienna. Just after 'Blossom Time' opened in Atlantic City Shubert told me that they were trying to clear the American rights to this play, and if they get it they plan to make an operetta of it."

"And you will write the music," she breathed.

"Yes." He closed his eyes for a moment. "What a chance that would be! Each night I pray that nothing goes wrong. An original operetta. Not just additional music, not adapting the music of a Franz Schubert, but starting from the beginning, from the first note. Can you imagine what that would mean?"

"Yes," she said. "Yes. And each night there will now be two of us praying for you." She stood up. "Goodnight, Mr. Romberg." Then she turned swiftly and walked into the hotel.

3.

After breakfast the following morning, Romberg said, very casually, "Fellows, it's so damned hot up here. What do you say. Let's shave these foolish beards off."

"That's a good idea," Atteridge said.

"After all, it's a little childish," Romberg said.

Jolson pursed his lips. "Wait a minute, wait a minute," he drawled. "It's no hotter today than yesterday."

"I know. It was hot yesterday too," Romberg said uneasily. "I had trouble sleeping last night. I think these whiskers are irritating my face."

"Trouble sleeping, hey?" Jolson asked. "What could have kept you up? It couldn't have been that young lady you were trying to sell a bill of goods to in front of the hotel this morning?"

"Please," Romberg said with dignity.

"I'm leaving the hotel. It must have been after two," Jolson pursued. "And there's this character practically in her lap."

Romberg turned red. "Okay, okay."

"Little Lillian," Jolson said. He reached over and tugged at Romberg's beard. "What's the matter, old boy, did she object to your little old beard?"

"I told you. It's too hot."

"And you want to get prettied for her. Well, Romberg, you listen to old Massa Jolson. She's only seen you with a beard. I've seen you both ways. I say the beard is an improvement."

"The young lady has nothing to do with it. I'm going to shave and cool off." He started toward the bathroom.

Jolson stopped him sternly. "Romberg, remember the pact!"

Now Atteridge and de Sylva leaped to their feet. "Yes," they shouted. "Remember the pact!"

Romberg held out his hands in defeat. "All right, musketeers, only let's get to work and finish this damned show."

He kept his friends at the grindstone for the next few days. If they wouldn't allow him to shave at least they wouldn't take any time off. When he was not actually at the piano he went to the hotel and tried to engineer a chance encounter with her. He didn't see her. He worked with a fury, but he found his friends were in a conspiracy against him. Within a week he had scribbled the last note on paper and then he stood up and yelled, "I'm finished! I'm going to shave!"

Jolson shook his head. "I just got an idea for a new scene. It will need another song."

For the next few days, each of the other three men, in turn, suddenly was inspired with ideas for additional scenes. And each scene required new music. And there was the pact. . . . Romberg pleaded, cajoled, but they were firm. There had been a solemn pact. And when the last new idea was completed, there would be another one. . . .

He wandered around disgruntled when he was not needed at the piano. One afternoon he heard her voice, saying, "Hello, Mr. Romberg. If it were possible to interpret expression under that beard I would say you were unhappy about something."

He looked up eagerly. He stepped toward her. She was away again. It hit him like cold water. Whatever had happened during their long talk had disappeared. He collected himself. "How have you been?" he asked politely.

"Splendid, thank you." It was as though she were embarrassed at the emotion that had sprung up between them that night. "How is your work coming?" she asked politely.

"Almost finished."

"One may hope for an unmasking soon, then?" she said, in her cool, bantering voice.

"The boys are playing tricks with me," he said in the same light way. "I was finished a long time ago. They are just inventing excuses to keep me from shaving."

"Oh? You *want* to shave."

"It's been so damned hot."

"I see."

"Look, what are you doing this afternoon?" he asked. "Later."

"Nothing in particular."

"Well, it's just one now. Let's meet at four-thirty?"

"If you like."

"I'll meet you in the lobby."

"With beard?"

"I'm afraid so," he said dourly. "There are still a couple of numbers. I've written enough music for three shows. Usually it's enough for two, but this time, three!"

She strolled away and he went into the hotel. He looked around for the flower girl. "How much are your violets?" he asked.

"Twenty-five cents a bunch, Mr. Romberg," the girl said.

"And how many bunches do you have there?"

"About twenty, Mr. Romberg."

"Good. Now here is ten dollars. I want you to go to Miss Lillian Harris' room about four o'clock and give them all to her."

The girl looked bewildered. "Yes, Mr. Romberg," she said.

He left the hotel and returned to the cabin, humming happily to himself. He understood Miss Harris' reverting to aloofness and he was rather pleased by it. There was something fresh and new about the girl; after the years of showgirls and actresses, it was refreshing to discover someone who treasured emotion so dearly that the sudden uncovering of it left her shy again. He could imagine how one of the theatrical women he knew would have acted the next time they had met, after the long confidences.

At four-thirty he was back in the lobby, still unshaved, but in clean linen and clothing. He walked up and down, smoking nervously. She did not appear. He waited until five-thirty and then, furious, he left. He wanted to kick himself all the way back to his cabin. What a fool he had been!

At dinner his friends correctly interpreted his anger and worked on him expertly. The more he thought about having been stood up the more furious he became. Suddenly he got up from the table and went back to the hotel. He saw her emerge from the dining room. He rushed up to her, and with each step his anger seemed to diminish. When he finally stood before her it had evaporated entirely and all he could think of was how lovely she looked. "Would you care to dance?" he offered.

"I have a headache," she said, even more distantly than ever.

"Didn't you receive my flowers?" he asked.

Her eyes flashed. "Yes, I did, Mr. Romberg. So did everyone else here except my waitress. You seemed to overlook her so I gave her mine!"

"What do you mean," he said in astonishment, "everyone else?"

"Every woman in the hotel has a bunch of posies from you with your compliments," she said evenly. "The talk is of nothing else this evening. You are quite the charmer, aren't you?"

He was utterly bewildered. "But, Miss Harris—"

"I suppose that is the Viennese touch," she said.

"Miss Harris—"

"How nice you were for a little while," she said.

"Please—"

"Goodnight, Mr. Romberg." She walked away.

"When can I see you again?" he pleaded.

"I'm sure I don't know."

He watched her enter the elevator and then he began to look again for the flower girl. Something had gone wrong and he had to get it straightened out. The girl had long since gone home. He walked back to the cabin, his head whirling.

The following day he returned to the hotel and when he found the flower girl he asked her what had happened.

"Nothing," the girl said innocently. "I went to Miss Harris'

room as you said and gave her the prettiest bunch in my basket. Then I looked for you but you were gone. I couldn't sell the others because you had bought them all. I didn't know what to do."

"What did you do?" he asked.

"I tried to call you at your cottage. You were not there but Mr. Jolson answered the telephone."

"Mr. Jolson!"

"I knew he was a friend of yours so I explained the whole thing to him and asked him what to do."

"I begin to understand," Sigmund said.

"He was so nice. He told me to give away the rest of the flowers to all the ladies in the hotel and he said to be sure and tell them they were from you." She asked in some anxiety. "Did I do wrong, Mr. Romberg?"

"Stay with me. Just stay with me. I want you to tell Miss Harris exactly what you told me."

"Please, Mr. Romberg, don't get me in trouble."

"I won't, child. But just let's find Miss Harris and you explain this to her."

He found, upon inquiring at the desk, that Miss Lillian Harris had checked out that morning. No, the clerk said, she left no forwarding address. At least, the clerk thought to himself, not to Mr. Sigmund Romberg. She had been quite vehement about that.

4.

The new Jolson show, 'Bombo,' opened in New York exactly a week after the Broadway premiere of 'Blossom Time.' No two presentations could have been more dissimilar. Jolson was at his supreme best, and of course the operetta based on Schubert's life became folk-opera almost instantly. There was scarcely to be a time in the years that followed when it was not being revived somewhere in this country.

And now the grind started again. 'Old Heidelberg,' still tied up in an international copyright snag, was the bait. He pestered his producer constantly about the Viennese show and Shubert assured him that he was doing everything he could to clear the American rights. Meanwhile the endless stream of music went on. Two unusually successful productions on Broadway; music for a new show, 'The Blushing Bride,' set for a February opening; additional numbers for an operetta, 'Rose of Stamboul,' booked to open a month after that. He was approached by friends with a request for another project which he could not refuse: a home for children suffering from heart trouble, located in Roslyn, Long Island, had burned. The children were without medical care. He was asked to produce an amateur show to raise funds for a new hospital. He wrote and staged 'Vanity Fair' in the Waldorf, and the production grossed some $40,000, which permitted the beginning of a new hospital called Irvington House, of Irvington-on-the-Hudson, a hospital twice the size of the original home and including an extensive research laboratory.

In the midst of all this work he heard a bit of news which caused him to hurry to the office of his old friend, Isidore Witmark, who, he knew, was now in financial difficulties. At that time there existed between the Shuberts and the music-publishing firm of Schirmer and Sons an arrangement under which Schirmer was allotted the American publishing rights for foreign shows which were imported by the producers. Schirmer had already acquired the rights for whatever music might be written for 'Old Heidelberg.' The music firm, at this time, however, was being reorganized and Gus Schirmer let it be known that he wanted to dispose of some of the rights the firm owned for future Shubert productions, and it was this information that caused Romberg to urge his old friend Witmark to obtain the contract for the still-unwritten 'Old Heidelberg.' Several days later Witmark called Romberg back and said that he had inquired and been informed

that Schirmer would sell the music rights to the show for $3000.

"It's a bargain," Romberg said enthusiastically. "Grab it."

"You haven't even written the music. You don't even know if Shubert ever will clear the show and, if he clears it, if he will ever produce it, and if he ever produces it, if it will be successful," Witmark said.

"Listen," Romberg said. "I have a hunch about that show. Get the rights if you can. I promise you it will be a good investment."

"I'm willing to be persuaded," Witmark said. "Just tell me one more thing. Where am I going to raise the three grand?"

"Is it that bad?"

"It's not dangerous, my friend, but you know how unsettled things are these days. Schirmer has to reorganize for financial reasons and wants to liquidate some of his holdings. We're short for ready cash too. I'd like to gamble with you on this thing, but $3000 is $3000."

"Let me think about it," Romberg said. "I'll figure out something."

The following afternoon he visited the vice-president of his bank. He told that financier that he would like to borrow $3000.

"There is no difficulty involved in that for a man of your reputation, Mr. Romberg," the bank official said suavely. "There is, however, one technicality. Our banking rules require that you have an endorser."

Romberg scratched his chin. "Would Mr. Isidore Witmark, president of the music-publishing firm of Witmark and Sons, be satisfactory?" he asked.

"He most certainly would," the official agreed heartily.

The note was prepared. Witmark endorsed it and the money soon was in his hands. He thereupon proceeded to buy the rights to the unwritten music for the unacquired play. "Now we shall see what we shall see," said Witmark. He peered at Romberg's head. "Hidden assets," he murmured. He shrugged. "What do you do

now, my friend? I must know. I have an investment in your time."

Romberg grinned. "I'm going back to Europe again."

"Europe?" Witmark threw up his hands. "How do you help me being in Europe. What a time to take a vacation!"

"I have four shows running on Broadway at the same time," Romberg said, his eyes twinkling. "I better get out of this country before I get arrested for violating the anti-monopoly laws!"

5.

The room clerk at the New Bristol Hotel bowed low. "Herr Romberg," he said. "This is an honor. Of course you will desire a suite."

"Of course," Romberg agreed.

"We have an excellent suite. One that is perfect for you. And the rate is only 2100 schillings a day."

Romberg tried to calculate rapidly. The clerk anticipated him. "The exchange is presently 300 schillings to the dollar. Your suite will amount to $7 a day in American money."

Romberg nodded. "Supposing I rent the suite for two months. I shall not be in Vienna all that time but I intend to make this my headquarters and I want to leave some luggage here."

The clerk said that would be agreeable and Romberg signed a lease for a two-months' rental at a monthly rate of 63,000 schillings which at one time would have been more than a duke could have afforded. He planned to remain in Vienna for a week and then go to Belisce to pick up his parents and bring them to the spa at Baden bei Wien.

When he was unpacked he went out into the city, which, in 1922, was even worse than it had been three years before. Vienna had never recovered. The streets were filled with cripples and beggars and every other woman seemed to be a prostitute. These

pitiful women did not even wait until evening to offer themselves; in bright sunlight, at high noon, dressed in fearful finery, they accosted anyone who appeared to possess enough cash for an hour or two of their time.

He sought old friends, as he had three years earlier; the familiar faces were even more scarce. The dead and missing in a war now four years ended was still rising. In a little coffee house one afternoon he saw Franz Lehar, whom he had seen last in 1908, youthful, witty, filled with ambition. Lehar now wore the exhaustion that covered the faces in Vienna like a veil; he greeted Romberg warmly and congratulated him on his success in America. The two men dined together and then went to Lehar's apartment, where, at the request of the Viennese, Romberg played some of his music on Lehar's piano.

The older man listened, nodding now and then, and then they talked long into the night. Lehar told him bitterly how he had been unable to receive any of the American royalties due him since the beginning of the war because they were tied up as alien funds pending reparation settlements. "And I have had some very good offers to come to America and write there," he said.

"Why don't you?" Romberg said with enthusiasm. "There is so much you could do there."

Lehar smiled tiredly. "My friend," he said, "there is much I can do here."

"Vienna has died," Romberg said.

"Perhaps. But we who were her lovers when she was alive must now sit with the corpse. There is little here for cheer and those of us who can write music have a duty to stay here and do so."

"Do you condemn me?" Romberg asked quietly.

"No, my friend," Lehar said. "You left long ago when Vienna was alive. It would have been easier for you to remain. Perhaps it can be said that you chose the more difficult road at that time.

But now there is no choice, either for you or me." He smiled wanly. "We can live, we Viennese, only in art now. The world will know us only through the dreams of artists who remember. When you go back to America, do not forget Vienna. And through your eyes and through your art thousands of others will know how we once were."

He said goodnight to the tired, prematurely aged man and walked back slowly to his hotel.

Adam Romberg looked little changed from his appearance of three years before, but Sigmund's mother told him privately that his father was failing steadily. His mother, suffering from a gallbladder ailment and now a victim of frequent spontaneous crying spells, a nervous result of years of strain, told him that they had lost all their savings.

The financial stress was something Sigmund could do something about. Whatever else could be said about the kind of work he was doing in New York, at least it paid well.

He had good news for his parents about Hugo, who now was an established public accountant in Ohio. Hugo had tried to arrange his affairs to make the trip home with his brother but had been unable to do so.

During the long afternoons at the spa Sigmund again begged his parents to come to America, and this time it seemed to him their objections were not as strong as they had been three years earlier. "We will think seriously about it," his mother promised. "I think we both know there is nothing for us here any longer. We will think about it."

"We are old people and we cannot make decisions quickly," Adam said. "Give us a little time to get used to the idea."

Sigmund grinned. "I might have a little surprise for you when you come over."

Clara Romberg's face became radiant. "I can read your heart, Sigmund," she said. "You have found the girl."

"How do you know these things?" he teased.

"I'm a mother." She took his hand. Her face was wreathed with happiness. "Sigmund, Sigmund, after all these years. She must be lovely."

"She is." Then he said: "My dear parents, wouldn't you like to come to New York and meet her? Who knows, there might be a marriage some day. Wouldn't you like to be present at the wedding of your oldest son?"

"What is her name?" Adam asked.

"Lillian Harris."

"Lillian Harris," he repeated slowly. Adam's voice was filled with so much emotion that Sigmund decided he had better not tell his parents he had met this girl only once, and even then did not know where to find her again.

Instead, he said: "Now, that ought to be a big inducement. If you don't want to come to America to see your sons, perhaps you will come to see my fiancee." He wondered how Lillian would react to that announcement.

At the end of the visit he put his parents on a train for Belisce feeling that he had half-won them over to the idea of joining him in New York. He boarded the Ahlberg Express, going to Switzerland before embarking from France. As the train rolled along the countryside, he thought of what he had said to his parents about Lillian. It had come almost as much of a surprise to him as it had to them.

And as he thought about it the idea developed and he realized that he had spoken of something he must have thought subconsciously to himself ever since that night in the Adirondacks. He leaned back in his seat and watched the countryside as it passed and he thought of Lillian.

XIV

On a blustery March afternoon when he returned to his apartment he found a message that Dorothy Donnelly had called. He called her back and thought he could detect an odd excitement in her voice as she asked, "What are you doing for dinner?"

"Having it with you, I hope," he said promptly.

"You're a nice man. I was hoping you'd say that." Her voice began to tinkle. "Come along as soon as you can."

"Is there anything up?"

"You just come on along up here."

A great friendship had developed between the charming middleaged playwright and the composer, starting from the time when they had collaborated on 'Blossom Time,' and nurtured during the months they both dreamed of when the rights to 'Old Heidelberg' would be cleared and they would work together on that. When Romberg had returned from Europe the preceding fall, broken and depressed by his parents' condition, he had turned to her, and, unknown to him at the time, she had written a letter to his parents telling them not to worry about him and promising them that she would see to it that he kept his word and visited them again the following summer. She said that while

she had never met them she felt she knew them because of all the things Sigmund had told her, and she added her pleading to his that they come back to this country when he saw them next. This gesture had touched Romberg deeply, and he grew to love and respect this woman who seemed to possess so much sympathy and understanding.

Once, when he was again bewailing his being required to work on a neverending stream of revues and musical comedies, she had taken him up to one of the Sunday evening soirees of Edward Sheldon, the playwright, who now was permanently bedridden. Sheldon, whose career had started out brilliantly with a play called 'Romance,' had been stricken during the war (in which he served as a lieutenant), and now suffered from some incurable disease which required him to be bandaged from his head to feet.

With a courage that was monumental, the young man refused to accept the limitations of his condition. It had become a kind of custom, among theatrical people, to visit him on Sunday evenings, eat and drink before him while he lay in his bed, his eyes and face covered with bandages, and pass along the latest Broadway gossip. Afterward the actors and actresses would enact their roles in whatever plays they were appearing, and the stricken man, whose voice alone was untouched by his condition, listened and commented and saw the play in his mind.

It was an unwritten law that no mention was to be made of Sheldon's condition. As for himself, Sheldon was witty and amusing and his comments were keen and perceptive. When Romberg had visited him with Dorothy Donnelly, he had played the entire score of 'Blossom Time,' while Dorothy outlined the action that went along with the music. Upon leaving, Romberg said to Dorothy: "I don't believe I've ever seen anything more inspiring in my life. My God, how petty other misfortunes seem when you encounter a great soul like that." Then he looked at her suddenly.

"I see," he said. "I see why you brought me here and I thank you for it."

Now he rode up to her apartment, a penthouse opposite the Vanderbilt Hotel at 34th Street and Park Avenue, wondering what had caused the suppressed excitement in her voice. When she opened the door, her eyes were sparkling. "What's all this?" he asked.

"You come inside, young man," she said.

There was a bottle of champagne in a cooler in the living room. "Have I forgotten? Is it your birthday?" he asked.

She poured the wine and held a long-stemmed glass to him. "J. J. called a little while ago," she said in a conversational voice. "He's been looking for you."

"Another show, probably."

"Another show," she agreed.

"That's not news," he sighed.

"It may be. It's something called 'Old Heidelberg.' "

"Dorothy, no!"

"Dorothy, yes!" She laughed and clapped her hands. "He's finally got all the legal business straightened out and he told me we could definitely start work on it."

He put down his wineglass and threw his arms around her. "Dorothy, Dorothy, at last!"

"I've even got the script."

"An original operetta. Dorothy, what an opportunity for us. Everything original. When is it scheduled?"

"It's not set yet. But we are to start immediately."

He sat down again and fingered his glass. "I remember sitting with Franz Lehar in a little coffee house in Vienna. He said that the good old days were gone forever but they could be made to live again through writers and musicians." He held up the glass. "Here's luck, Dorothy."

2.

The news that Dorothy Donnelly had given him seemed almost to serve as a signal: as he left the apartment, every sense tingling, he knew that now he had to find Lillian and tell her that he was going to be given his chance. The need to see her now was almost overpowering.

He had no lead to her whereabouts at all. He remembered something about her coming from a Washington family but that was all. He called Jolson and asked him if he knew how to get in touch with any of the individuals in the group which had come to the cabin that evening; Jolson's sole clue was someone who was in California and he promised to hunt up the address and pass it along.

He never before so vividly understood the immense anonymity of the United States. Where could he turn? She could be living in an apartment across the street from him or she might be three thousand miles away. How could he begin to look for her? He had lived for three years in the same building and he did not even know the name of the man who lived next door!

It was wholly frustrating. He had not the remotest idea where to start. One of his friends told him the legend that if one stood long enough in front of one of the lions at the Public Library at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue everybody in the world sooner or later would pass. In his impotence he conceived a fury with *her* because she had not sought him out: he, at least, was an easy man to find.

And then, some weeks later, when his nerves were those of a man in a straightjacket, he saw her, and if ever before he believed in a star he believed in one then. He had taken Ann Roberts to the theatre and then they had gone to the Oak Room at the Plaza Hotel for supper. As he sat down at a table he glanced across the room and he saw her.

He never knew how long he sat there, transfixed. He felt a slight tug on his sleeve. Then Ann snapped her fingers in front of his eyes, as a hypnotist might in attempting to wake a person in a spell. "Excuse me, Ann," he said, forcibly breaking his eyes away.

"An old creditor, no doubt?" the girl asked.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be rude."

"She's not bad, Romy," Ann said, dimpling. "Would you like me to just get up quietly and leave?"

He took her hand contritely. "Please forgive me. I *was* very rude. Now, what shall we eat? Would you like a welsh rabbit?"

"Who is she?"

"Or perhaps a small steak?"

"Who is she, Romy?"

He put the menu on the table and again looked across the room. "You're such a comfortable person, Ann," he said. "She's someone I met once."

"Just once? And you look at her like that?"

"Just once, Ann. Once, briefly, and I've never been able to find her again."

Ann was silent for a moment, and then she said, softly, "Romy, we are very good friends. Why don't you just go over to her and say hello?"

He looked at her so eagerly she felt a pang. But he shook his head. "No, Ann. Thanks."

"Is it that giant sitting next to her?"

"Giant?"

"There *is* a man with her, if you haven't noticed. A big man. Are you afraid?"

"Ann."

"You know what they say about opportunity. Now I'll go into the powder room and put on a new face so I won't have to witness

the touching scene and you caper over and say hello and get the lady's telephone number."

"Ann, I adore you."

"I'm your sister. Remember? You don't adore sisters. You love them but you don't adore them. You just adore girls like the one sitting across the room." She stood up. "Good adoring, Romy. See you later."

He remained seated for a moment or two and then he rose and crossed the room. "Miss Harris."

She looked up coolly. "Well, Mr. Romberg, hello! Where did you pop up from?"

The man with her was on his feet. He was enormous, Sigmund realized. "Mr. Romberg, Mr. Rawlings," Lillian said.

"A pleasure, I'm sure," Rawlings said with a deep Texas drawl. "Sit down, sit down."

"How have you been, Miss Harris?"

"I've been very well, thank you. How are your shows coming along?" She turned to the Texan. "Mr. Romberg is connected with the theatre, Jim."

"The theatre," Rawlings boomed. "Shows. I like shows."

"Ah, you do like the theatre," Sigmund said.

"Do you remember the Winter Garden show we saw not long ago? That was one of Mr. Romberg's," Lillian said.

"How did you like it?"

"Good show," Rawlings said. "Darned good show. Wonderful comedians. Beautiful girls."

"How did you like the music?"

"Don't know much about music. I think it was too noisy."

Lillian started to cough. She lifted a handkerchief to her lips.

"Miss Harris," Sigmund said. "How is your dear mother?"

"My mother?" Lillian looked puzzled. "She's fine."

"I'm so glad. I've been wanting to call her for a long time and I never knew where to reach her."

"Call my mother?"

"Could you give me her number?"

Lillian looked at him for a moment and then her eyes crinkled. "Of course." She gave him a telephone number. "I'm sure my mother will be very pleased to hear from you."

"Would you be good enough to tell her I'll call her at ten o'clock tomorrow morning?"

"I certainly shall, Mr. Romberg."

He rose. "Please stay seated, Mr. Rawlings. Miss Harris, it was good seeing you again, Mr. Rawlings, a pleasure. And about that music at the Winter Garden. I quite agree with you. I think it was very loud. I'll speak to the man responsible." He walked back to his table.

"Now that's a right nice young fellow," Rawlings said. "Thinking about your mother. I wouldn't have expected that in a Yankee."

Ann greeted him, dimpling. "It worked, I see."

"Yes, Ann, it worked. I thank you again."

She looked at him keenly. "And it's good. If I didn't know you were a hardboiled old Broadway character I would say that strange gleam was a lovelight in your eyes." She sighed prettily and shook her head. "Well, Romy, I suppose this will be the last time I shall ever see you. And it has been so nice."

He was genuinely shocked. "Ann, what a thing to say!"

"It's about time, I guess. Daddy wants me to get married. He says I'm getting to be an old maid. I've been waiting for you to ask me but now I see you have other ideas. And I so wanted my children to be musicians." She looked across the room. "But she is lovely, my dear, really, really lovely. And now I *will* have that Welsh rabbit."

3.

When he called Lillian the next day she answered the ring, and as soon as she recognized his voice she said gravely, "Just a moment, Mr. Romberg. I'll call Mother."

"Lillian! I mean, Miss Harris!"

"Yes?"

"I've got to see you immediately."

"Don't you want to speak to Mother?"

"Where can we meet?"

"I'm hardly awake, Mr. Romberg."

"You shouldn't stay out so late. You'll be awake before I hang up. Where do you live?"

"You only asked for the telephone number last night."

"How's the Texas Ranger?"

"I haven't heard from him today. I probably shall. And how was that charming woman who was with you?"

"Ah, so you saw her. It's just after ten. Can we meet in half an hour?"

"No, I'm not dressed."

"An hour?"

"Too soon."

"Twelve o'clock. No later. I won't give you any more time."

"All right. Twelve o'clock. Where?"

"At the Plaza. That place is lucky for me."

When she entered the lobby he rose swiftly from his chair and rushed to her. He took her hand in his two hands and held it tightly. "You won't get away again." Then he said, "I have a table inside." At her plate was a small bouquet of violets.

"This is like a vaccination. More of the same."

"I have a story to tell you about those violets," he said.

When he finished, her eyes were laughing. "I think now that

it was wrong of me just to have gone off like that. But I *was* mortified."

"That's a good sign. Lillian, I've looked for you everywhere. I've written letters to California."

"California?"

"Jolson said that the people who brought you over that night were in California. I hoped they might know where to reach you. I tried to get in touch with the hotel in the Adirondacks. They're closed for the winter. I was going to be there as soon as the season opened and just sit and wait for you." He shook his head. "Lillian, Lillian, why didn't you call me or write? You must have thought of me. You go to see my shows."

"I told you I was terribly put out about those flowers. I thought you were having some fun in a typical Broadway manner."

"Lillian, I've never forgotten what you said that night." He looked at her intently.

She lowered her eyes. "I talked too much."

"No, you'll probably never wholly know how much it meant to me to have you talk that way. I never stopped thinking about it. Since I've seen you I've been to Europe to see my parents and back again. I thought of it often, of you, of what you said. I used to walk up and down the deck of the ship late at night and let the salt air enter me. It cleared my head so that everything I thought was so sharp it hurt. I used to talk to you."

He looked out of the window across 59th Street to the Park. "It was very strange. I wanted so badly to see you then but I knew that something had to happen to me before I *could* see you. I couldn't find you without that something happening. I can't quite explain it but I didn't want to face you again and have to admit that I was still writing themes and variations on Winter Garden shows that you take men from Texas to see." Then he looked at her angrily. "What the hell does he mean, the music was noisy! What does he know about music? He wouldn't know it

was music unless it was something you could sing to quiet cattle."

"Leave Mr. Rawlings alone," she said. "He is a nice man. He likes you. He thinks it was thoughtful of you to want to speak to my mother."

"Oh. Well, anyway, something had to happen. It was as though I were waiting for something." His eyes were pleading. "Can you understand what I am trying to say to you? It was as though I had to bring something to you."

"Yes, Sigmund."

"And it worked out that way. Something did happen and I did start to look for you seriously and when it seemed I never was going to be able to find out who you were or where you were or where to find you I came here to the Oak Room last night and there you were. And now I know it's all tied together. It seems so very soon to know and yet I know."

"What is it that has happened?" she whispered.

He took her hand and fondled her fingers. "You remember that night when I told you about that story of Heidelberg?"

"And now you are going to do it?"

"Now I am going to do it." Then he said: "Lillian, if I seem to be moving swiftly it is only because I've thought so much about this. It's as though I went through all the preliminary stages by myself. I don't feel awkward with you. I don't feel I have to talk in circles. I tried to tell you that night how much that story meant to me. Then, all this time, it has gotten to mean more. It became more than a show, more than even a good show. It became something I had to do for you. Lillian, do you understand? This is the first thing we have had together. I'm going to write that music and the loveliest thing of it all is that I'm going to write it for you."

4.

His excitement at the chance to write the operetta was dampened somewhat when he discovered that, while the rights had indeed been cleared, there were no definite plans at all to go into production, and that meanwhile he was expected to continue as before, working on three, four, or more shows a year, the usual unchanged, unchanging revues which year after year brought the same people into the same theatres and which constituted the basis of the Shubert structure.

It was something difficult to explain to Lillian, who had the idea that he was going to cut himself off from all other work and concentrate on the Heidelberg story. There was the 'Passing Show' as usual, and something new called 'Artists and Models,' copied from a Parisian revue, the chief attraction of which appeared to be a series of parades of beautiful women, partly naked from the waist up. The show was done in exquisite taste.

Throughout the summer he worked on these productions and also worked on the still-unscheduled 'Old Heidelberg,' and every free moment he could wean away from his work he spent with Lillian. He gave her the preliminary script of the operetta when Dorothy Donnelly finished it, and he explained his aims in creating the music to fit. He delighted in breaking down the problems and showing her how he planned to solve them and he was gratified to find how fascinated she became in his work, and how astute her infrequent comments were.

In the fall his mother wrote that his father was ill, and, afraid that she was not telling him the whole story, he cabled Ernoe Gutmann and asked for a full report. Ernoe's reply confirmed his belief that his father needed constant attention, and he was convinced that could be obtained only in New York. He told Lillian of the condition and she immediately set out to look for a suitable apartment for the old couple.

A few weeks later his mother wrote that his father was not improving. He instructed Ernoe to bring a specialist down from Vienna, to live in Belisce if necessary, and to keep the medical man there as long as his father needed him. The cost for this move reached an incredible figure.

"You see why I have to keep going on this way," he said to Lillian. "I can't slow up for a minute if I'm going to be able to carry this."

"You don't have to explain to me," she said. "Don't you know that you never have to explain to me?"

After examining Adam Romberg, the specialist expressed the opinion that an operation was necessary to save the old man's life and that the operation would have to be performed in Vienna. Sigmund got the money together and sent it to his mother. In March he received word that the operation had been performed and had been successful. However, his father would for some time require the services of a trained nurse and he cabled money for that. To pay for all this he asked his producers for more work, and in the spring of 1924 he worked successively upon four different shows without break, and at the same time found time, slowly, bit by bit, to add to the score for 'Old Hiedelberg.'

In April Ernoe wrote that Mrs. Romberg was weakening under the strain of his father's condition. He arranged to have two nuns from the Convent of St. Mary in Osiek come to Belisce and live with his parents.

There was one thing which made good news: Shubert at last agreed on a definite program for 'Old Heidelberg.' He announced he planned to put the operetta into production that fall. There was one stipulation: he insisted on hearing the entire score before he started casting.

This news caused Romberg to increase his efforts. He had to finish the music for the operetta in time, no matter how much additional work he had to do. On an afternoon that April he was

called to the Winter Garden to sit in on a rehearsal for a new revue called 'Innocent Eyes,' scheduled to open a few weeks later. He hurried to the theatre. He had worked half-through the night on 'Old Heidelberg, and, after a short sleep, had shifted later that morning to the music he was composing for a new 'Passing Show.'

An hour after he arrived at the theatre, while onstage, he suddenly toppled over. Weeping with rage he was taken in an ambulance to a hospital, where, after a thorough examination, he was ordered to remain, and to quit all work for at least a month.

He lay in bed, shaking with futile fury. The door opened and Lillian entered. "A whole month," he cried. "Four weeks gone from my precious time!"

5.

He blinked his eyes at the bright spring sunshine and dutifully clasped Lillian's hand as he walked slowly down the hospital steps. "There are some compensations for being an invalid," he said cheerfully. "Are you going to come home with me and nurse me there?"

"You are quite healthy again, young man. The doctor says you have the constitution of a horse."

"Excellent. Obviously a superior doctor. Now let us find the finest restaurant in New York. Lillian, you have no idea what they label food in a hospital."

"It did you a world of good. You look perfectly fit."

"Ha! Can you imagine how I will look after I surround a porterhouse steak, with some, shall we say, baked potato, and possibly some asparagus with hollandaise sauce, and a salad?"

"You never did have anything wrong with your digestion."

She watched him as he assailed the food that was brought to him. When coffee was served he relaxed in his seat and sighed

with happiness. "Isn't it terrible to be so happy about a good meal? With so many things to worry about all I can think of is how wonderful that steak was."

She tilted her head. "And the new hat goes to waste."

"New hat? Of course, Lillian. It's beautiful."

"*And* the new dress. And the new hairdo. And all he can think of is his steak. Darling, look at my face. There is a new look there. I've been rehearsing it for days. I thought to myself, when the man gets out of the hospital what will he want? What will he want more than anything else? All the books say that invalids should be surrounded by love. So, I practice putting love on my face. You know, the tender expression, the special light in the eyes, the sweet and gentle voice. Then I surround this production the best I can. How do you say it, I dress it up. New hat—dress—hours in a beauty parlor—and what does the invalid say? He says, quote, how good that steak was, how marvelous, unquote." She shook her head. "Sigmund, Sigmund, and you call yourself an artist! Even my Texan would have known better."

"I must admit you are a vision," he said.

"Too late," she mourned. "What good is it now?"

"But that's very little change. I always see you the same. What difference does a new hat make? That new look on your face? I've always seen that look on your face. Even that first night when it was so dark I couldn't see your face." He paused. "I shouldn't make a joke of it, not even to you. But I saw that face from the beginning. I had to see it. And the sweetness in the voice. I'm translating all that. I'm taking it all away from you. I'm putting it on paper and other lovers will find it there and when they listen they will know they are closer to each other than they ever were before, closer than they thought they could be. And all because of you, Lillian.

"Even each of those little tears I see in your eyes. I'll use them too. Because that's the way it has to be. Love means nothing with-

out pain. I'm using all of it, the look on your face, a look that you don't have to put there, that you don't even know is there, that perhaps only I ever see, and a sound to your voice and the way your eyes get when your heart flows over and what it means to me to be able to touch your fingers now and then. Remember that, Lillian, this music is you and you are this music."

XV

"You did promise to come up and join me this summer," she said. "How far do you think letters can go? That was the last thing you promised before I left."

"I really planned on that," he said. "But there was too much work."

" 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg'?"

"Yes, of course."

"Another 'Passing Show'?"

"Naturally. There's one every year."

"The 'Artists and Models' you're rehearsing now?"

"Now, Lillian, that's my job. I don't pick these shows. I just write the music." He looked at her across the table. They were in a little Hungarian restaurant in the east eighties. Somewhere a gypsy orchestra was playing its international music. She looked lovely and tanned from her long summer vacation with her mother. He took her hand. "I've missed you so much. And now there is no letdown. How beautiful you are."

"Darling," she said. "Sometime I'll tell you about this long summer." Then she asked. "How far are you along with 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg'?"

"I've just about got everything finished."

"Darling."

"Almost everything. Everything but the love theme."

Her eyes crinkled. "And what's held that up?"

"I can't see from here to the Adirondacks. I can hear your voice on the telephone but I can't see your face." Then he said, almost casually. "I'm being quite serious, Lillian. It's been overdone, but there is still something called inspiration. This has got to be the most beautiful love theme I've ever written. It surprised me too. I can't do it alone."

Her eyes filled.

"Isn't it funny," he said slowly, "when you talk from your heart you have to use words like these. No decent playwright would ever stand for them. I've been around Broadway for so long I even embarrass myself. I needed you badly, Lillian. It's been a very long summer. There was plenty of time to think. Too much time. I've known for a long time how much I love you but this summer I found out how much I need you as well." He put a fresh cigarette into his mouth, lit a match, looked at the flame for a moment, and then held it to the end of the cigarette. "Lillian, will you marry me?"

"The summer was long for both of us," she whispered. "The hotel seemed to have nothing in it but a funny bearded man. I saw him everywhere."

"That was more often than you saw him when he really was there," he said ruefully.

"I bought a bunch of violets each evening and gave them to myself with the compliments of Sigmund Romberg. And I was the only woman, this time. Yes, my dearest, I want to marry you. I want very much to be married to you."

"This has been the emptiest summer of my life."

"With all your lovely young actresses?"

"With all my lovely young actresses. You'll be a lucky wife,

Lillian. You'll be married to one of the few men in this world to whom a chorus girl is not glamorous."

She tilted her head. "That is a lovely thought. It does put a different light on things."

"What kind of light? What kind of things?"

Her eyes crinkled again. "You know, you may think you thought of our marriage entirely by yourself. Most men do. Perhaps nature insulates you that way. But I've been thinking about it too. Quite seriously."

"Good!"

"Yes, good. And not so good."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, my darling, you must remember I come from a somewhat more conventional world than yours. In my world, when a girl thinks about marriage she usually talks to someone about it. Someone like a mother, for instance."

"Your mother doesn't object?" he asked anxiously.

"Well, she *is* a little shocked."

"Shocked? Don't girls in your world get married? If your mother would prefer we can just live together."

She laughed. "Not about getting married, silly. About my getting married to *you*."

He stiffened angrily now. "What's the matter with me?"

"Now darling, don't give your temperament a workout. There is nothing the matter with you. But you must understand Mother's viewpoint. She knows nothing about the theatre. All she has are some very oldfashioned ideas about it—and the people in it. Some people, you know, think the theatre is a very wicked place, full of wicked people. I know how oldfashioned that is but some persons are oldfashioned."

"Don't I know that," he said. "The trouble I had at my own home!"

"So you see. My mother is not alone. Please understand her!

She has some distorted ideas about actors and actresses. She thinks they spend their offstage time drinking champagne and living like characters in 'La Boheme.' You must know what I mean. She is thinking only of me. She doesn't want me to be hurt."

"Are you suggesting that I give up my work and turn honest?"

"I asked you not to get angry, my dearest. No, I don't want you to give up your work. Your work is quite important to me too. It's quite a large part of you and I couldn't love you if I didn't love it too. But we must make my mother understand. That's all. She must be assured that our marriage will be a marriage, such as she wants for me, and not—well, you know."

He took her hand and kissed it. "I'll convince her that I won't throw you overboard for the first toe-dancer I see!" He grinned. "And when she comes to the opening night of 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg'—she'll be proud to have me for a son-in-law."

"I'm sure she will. But we must move slowly."

"Andante moderato."

"Andante maestoso," she said.

"I see you know musical terms."

"I'm already preparing myself to be the wife of a composer."

2.

The theatre had the loneliness and gloom of all theatres after the audience has gone. The stage was lighted by a single unshaded bulb. There were not more than a dozen persons in the empty house and when they spoke their voices echoed hollowly and in the half-light the smoke from the cigarettes rose in pale-blue and on the stage two workers pushed the last of the scenery back and then walked off, their heavy shoes making loud sounds on the boards.

Sigmund sat in a corner in the last row of the theatre and held tightly to Lillian's hand as the musicians, one by one, took their

places on the stage. It was after midnight; the final curtain had fallen on that evening's performance of the 'Passing Show.' The Winter Garden audience had departed and now, for the first time, Sigmund was to play the music he had composed for 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg.'

The producers had arrived early and were seated midway down the orchestra. He could see only the backs of their heads. The idea was his own, this strange reading of the new score. He had told J. J. that he had completed it, and, as he had specified earlier, the producer wanted to hear it from beginning to end before he would begin to cast the show. He had in mind, in all probability, a reading on the piano, with Romberg playing, perhaps. But the composer couldn't think that way. Without saying anything, he scored all the music, had engaged an orchestra of forty men, had rehearsed them himself, and then had invited the producers and their staff to attend this early-morning concert.

Seated in the rear of the theatre Romberg was certain no one would ever know how important the next hour or two would be to him. The music *had* to impress the producers. The operetta *had* to be produced. Every single thing in his life was focused on that.

He had received, several weeks before, another letter from his mother telling him his father required a second operation, and he had borrowed heavily to make that possible. "Whatever strength your father still has is concentrated on the success of this one operetta," she had written. "It will be a happy man who dies if he knows that his son completed that beautiful music and presented it to the world. There is nothing you can do to help him beyond what you have done. You write that you want to abandon everything and return here. Please, please, don't cause him to know that he would be responsible for your not finishing your task. It would be wonderful, truly wonderful, my son, for

him to know the show has been produced before his time has ended."

In order to get more money he had taken on an outside assignment, of which his producers had not approved. Florenz Ziegfeld was putting on a new show, 'Annie Dear,' in which he was presenting his wife as star for the first time, and he had spared nothing to see that Billie Burke got the makings for a successful show. He had asked Romberg to do some work for him, and despite his knowing the Shuberts would not approve, he had accepted the Ziegfeld assignment gladly. Now he wondered if he had offended his own producers to the point where it might affect their reaction to his 'Old Heidelberg' score.

The orchestra was seated. Dorothy Donnelly arrived and sat next to Lillian, and then he said, "Kiss me for luck, sweetheart," and Lillian kissed him and held his fingers for a moment and then he kissed Dorothy and she crossed her fingers and he walked to the pit. He turned and looked at the thirty or thirty-five men and women in various parts of the theatre. The Shubert staff was in a group. Here and there were singers who had heard of the reading. Four or five of the 'Passing Show' chorus girls had come around to the theatre after changing. Every sound emphasized the emptiness of the theatre.

He faced his men and lifted his stick and the music started, and at two o'clock in the morning the final note was played and he stood for a moment, his shoulders slumped, and then he turned and faced his listeners. There was a silence and then a light scattered applause and for a moment he knew a shocked fright and then he remembered there were only a few persons in the house.

Now J. J. Shubert walked down the aisle. He took Romberg by the arm. "I see where we'll have to get some real singers for this score."

3.

Although preliminary business for the operetta was started there was no break in the normal production schedule of the Shuberts. The second edition of 'Artists and Models' was scheduled to open the 15th of October. Romberg was in a state of bemusement. Too many things were happening at once: his father's condition, his engagement to Lillian, preparation for the operetta, work on the revue, work on the Ziegfeld show. Perhaps it was his mood; he felt he had written rather pleasant music for the new 'Artists and Models.' He was particularly fond of one sequence in which a group of half-naked showgirls posed before exquisite Chinese vases.

The show seemed altogether lovely to him, and undoubtedly, from familiarity, he had become inured to its risque qualities. In any case, when Lillian gave him the exciting information that she had finally broken the news of their engagement to her mother, he suggested that they come to the opening night of the new edition of the revue.

Lillian called him back the next day and said that her mother thought it was a delightful idea. "I'll leave six tickets at the box office," he said open-handedly. "Bring some friends or relatives with you. I won't be able to sit in the audience with you on opening night. But I'll be backstage and after the end of the performance bring everyone around backstage. I'll wait for you there."

"All right, darling," she said. "And be sure you impress Mother. I want her to know what a nice person I'm going to marry."

"I shall be the soul of dignity and a model of comportment," he said. "I shall even be in evening dress. I shall look as respectable and conservative as a banker."

By its very nature, 'Artists and Models' was ensured of success before the first scene was played. Romberg was not at all concerned about the production as he stood in the wings and watched the revue unfold. His thoughts were on the effect he would try to create when Mrs. Harris and his other future in-laws arrived backstage. He wondered whether he ought to be engaged in an important conversation with one of the producers. Or whether he should be found giving esoteric orders to the stage manager or some other executive.

The final curtain was lowered and his plans were forgotten as he waited for the important meeting to take place. He said the usual things to the principals and had the usual things said to him. He walked up and down, his throat becoming drier and drier, and then he was aware of the fact that it was very quiet and, looking at his watch, he saw that almost an hour had elapsed since the theatre had emptied. He thought perhaps his instructions had been forgotten and the party had not been admitted. He rushed to the stage door but the watchman assured him no group of persons had asked for him.

He realized that something had gone very wrong and he called Lillian on the telephone. Her voice, when she answered, was low. "I'm sorry," she said. "Mother walked out of the show."

"But why?" he asked bewildered.

"Darling, perhaps you didn't realize it but that was not quite the show to bring Mother and our other relatives to."

"You mean—"

"She was speechless with shock. She left after the first act. Why didn't you tell me there would be naked women parading around? Darling, you managed to do exactly what my mother was afraid of. She is more convinced than ever that the theatre is an absolute den of iniquity."

"Oh, my God."

"She has forbidden me ever to see you again."

"But Lillian—"

"For the time being I'll have to humor her. She's in quite a state now. I'll find a way somehow to see you, but for the time being you'd better not call me. I'll get in touch with you when I can."

He was so shaken that not even the rehearsals of 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg,' which had started some two weeks earlier, could interest him. For a week he was in a daze, realizing more than ever how much he loved this girl and how much he had come to depend on her. Several times he called her. Once there was no answer and twice after that her mother had answered the telephone. He had hung up without speaking, afraid to make matters worse.

One afternoon after rehearsal, Dorothy Donnelly asked him to come to her apartment. When he got there he found Lillian waiting. "Someone had to get you two together again," Dorothy said. "At least Mrs. Harris doesn't think *I'm* such a rounder."

She left and Sigmund and Lillian ran to each other. Afterward she said: "My mother hasn't relented at all. And I can understand her so well. Oh, darling, why did you let her see that show? Even I was shocked."

"I guess I was a damned fool," he admitted. "But that all means so little to me I'd never have thought you would have resented it. I've been backstage so long I hardly know those girls are there."

"I've come to one decision, my dearest," she said. "We will try to persuade my mother she is wrong about your work. But no matter what she says, we will get married."

4.

He was given a free hand in the preparation of 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg.' He listened to scores of male voices and finally selected forty men for the chorus. Then he chose

twelve girls to sing with them. The Shubert rule that beauty came before voice was somewhat relaxed, and although the girls were attractive it was by their voices they were judged. For the female lead of the little waitress who falls in love with the prince, Ilse Marvenga, making her first appearance on the American stage, was chosen. Howard Marsh was cast as the prince, and Greek Evans as the kindly professor.

As he worked with the singers his thoughts constantly flew back to his youth. The little waitress, serving the students? He could see Malvina holding high her huge tray of beer. Again and again in the professor who was the adviser to the young prince he thought of his old friend Professor Boggio. The prince was more symbolic than real. It was a throne that called him away and caused the tragic collapse of the love affair; but all students, he thought, in all schools, reach the time when they must leave their beloved youth, their loves, their friends, and enter reality.

When he had visited his parents in Belisce the last time, he had found that there were a group of White Russian refugees living in the town, families who had fled the Russian Revolution, and that the men had formed a chorus. He had arranged a musical program for his father before he left in which the Russians had sung, marvelously disciplined. In his mind this chorus became the standard to which he drilled the forty men who sang on the stage. When he thought they had reached perfection he remembered the Russians and ordered them to rehearse again.

Everything was as he wanted it. If it failed, it would be because he had failed. There was no syncopation anywhere, no jazz. There was no chorus line. Dancing was confined to a graceful toe-dance at the opening of the third act. At the end the lovers were separated, as they would be in life, and no concession was made to the routine operetta convention that called for a happy ending. When this point was debated and the possibility of changing the story so that in some way the lovers could remain together

was considered, he fought tooth and nail against the suggestion. Box-office popularity was brought up and he countered with the argument that the ending of 'Blossom Time' was tragic and that had not affected the box office of that operetta.

The first public performance of 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg' was given in Atlantic City and perhaps the hopes of everyone had been built too high. When the last curtain was down and the audience left the theatre, everyone connected with the production felt an emotional let down. Shubert called a meeting attended by Dorothy Donnelly, Romberg, and J. C. Huffman, the stage director. The producer walked up and down nervously, and then he whirled and said: "We've got to make some changes. There's something wrong somewhere and we've got to find out what it is and change it. The audience was left cold."

Romberg began to stiffen and then he felt the quieting hand of Dorothy Donnelly on his wrist. He lit a cigarette and kept silent.

"I think we've overshot a little." Shubert went on, each word cutting Romberg like a sharp blade. "In the first place we tried to do something that had class. I think we've succeeded too well. I think it's got too much class. It's almost an opera. Broadway audiences won't swallow that. We are not the Metropolitan Opera Company. We are producing shows for popular tastes. Specifically, I think some of the numbers have got to be changed. I think, for instance, that the 'Serenade' number in the first act is all wrong."

Now Romberg was half-out of his seat and nothing Dorothy could do would restrain him. The producer could not have hurt him more. In a show filled with music he loved, the 'Serenade' was something special even beyond the others. Months before, Edward Sheldon had written a play and had asked Romberg to write a 'mother theme' which would be carried through the story, which dealt with a boy and his dead mother. Romberg had writ-

ten the music and then the play had closed before it reached Broadway. It was this 'mother theme' that he had adapted into the 'Serenade.' He had written that song from the deepest part of his heart, feeling in it a union with his own mother. It was unthinkable to him to remove it.

"I'll admit that we didn't shake the world," he said in cold fury. "But the operetta is as good as I think it is. Of course there will need to be small changes, but the way you talk the whole damned thing ought to be changed and a line of chorus girls put into it in every scene!"

"Well," the producer said stiffly. "Perhaps we wouldn't be having this trouble if you had paid more attention to this show. Talking about doing it for years and when we finally get to do it you hardly concentrate on it."

"What—" Romberg was astounded. "What are you talking about? Not concentrating. I've worked myself crazy with this show!"

"And spending half your time with another producer," Shubert said.

"Another producer—" And then Romberg began to understand. It was not 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg' alone that was being criticized. Shubert at last was getting rid of some of the anger he had felt over Romberg's working on the Ziegfeld show. Suddenly everything seemed to fall into place. Romberg sat down and relaxed and his fury left him as suddenly as it had started. A game was being played and now he knew the rules.

A subtle duel ensued. The producer was genuinely offended by what he considered disloyalty on Romberg's part. He tore the operetta apart. Romberg deflected the arguments as they were hurled at him. He made minor concessions for tactical purposes, but held to his main argument that the show was sound, because he understood by now that Shubert thought so too. Many of the

changes he agreed to he had decided to make himself as the play had shaken itself down in the tryout.

He stalled and hemmed and hawed and made tentative agreements without having to accede to any major change. He was gratified to see that the producer was satisfied with these concessions and that what he really wanted, more than anything else was simply to reestablish his ascendency over his composer and to punish him for his defection.

One thing was decided definitely at the meeting. The title was shortened. The play which originally had been called 'Old Heidelberg' and which had been changed to 'The Student Prince in Heidelberg,' now would be known simply as 'The Student Prince.

5.

He left the cable office and walked slowly through the icy streets. He had just informed his parents that on this evening December 2, 1924, 'The Student Prince' was opening on Broadway. The bitter wind tore through the building-made canyons and he turned up his collar and thrust his hands into his pockets His face was blue with cold when he reached the theatre. Lillian was waiting in the lobby. "I called you," she said nervously "Where were you?"

"I've been walking."

"Of course. Do you feel better?"

"Yes."

"You were going to cable your mother and father."

"I have. Are your mother and her friends all settled?"

"Yes, thank you, Sigmund."

"Your mother doesn't resent the fact that I put you in a separate box?"

"No, I think she understands."

"I'll be with you from time to time. I didn't want anyone else

there." They went inside the theatre. "You better get seated, darling. It won't be long now."

"Dearest," she said.

"Yes?"

"Do you remember that long night at the Saranac Inn?"

"Yes."

"I've never stopped praying for you."

"Lillian."

"Good luck, my dearest one. And God bless you."

He stood in the rear of the theatre and watched the people walk in, their faces marked with the cold. They walked to their seats as though it were any ordinary opening. And this was not any opening. This was *the* opening; no matter what he ever did in his life again, this was *the* opening. For in a very little while he would know. He would know whether he had finally proved to the toughest audience in the world that he was not a composer of meretricious music, music which had been stamped by the critics as largely hackneyed, superficial, and at best merely pleasant. 'The Student Prince' was his answer. It was many things, but at that moment, as he recognized the critics who had had such a field day with him on other occasions, all he could think was that it was his answer to them.

The operetta had been changed but slightly since its inauspicious opening in Atlantic City. With the changes it had played to a more enthusiastic opening night audience in Philadelphia, and during its run in that city had attracted steadily increasing houses. But tonight was the night. Broadway success was the criterion. New York was to America what Vienna had been to Europe a quarter of a century before. Without Broadway success a play was nothing. With it—with it, well—it was a Broadway success.

He was worried about the choice of theatre. The producer had elected to bring the operetta into the Jolson Theatre on 59th Street

and Seventh Avenue, which had been closed ever since Jolson himself had played there in 'Bombo.' Since that time the producers had been afraid to book one of their shows into a theatre so distant from the theatrical center, and other producers, booking through the Shuberts, had shared their fear. The Jolson Theatre was regarded as something of a white elephant and Romberg had taken the news of the choice with considerable fear.

There were advantages. The theatre was modern and the acoustics were superb. It had a large stage and a large orchestra pit and seating capacity of close to fourteen hundred. All of this was fine, of course, provided that the show was strong enough to bring people so far uptown.

There was something else which caused him great concern as he watched the house slowly fill. While playing in Philadelphia it was discovered that the stagehands were unable to change the scenery between the third and fourth acts in the very brief period required. It was indispensable to the mood of that portion of the story that the break between the two acts be as short as possible so that the audience would not leave their seats, so that the emotion from the third act could be carried over without interruption into the fourth act. To solve the difficulty, Romberg had been required to write music to be played during the scene change, and while he had written the music in Philadelphia it had never been played before, and he was scheduled to conduct it himself for the first time at the New York opening.

It was a gamble. Theatre tradition required that only a composer of recognized, serious music be permitted to lead the orchestra for a Broadway opening; the composer had to have enough standing so that no one would dare insult him by leaving the theatre for a smoke. The question was: would he be accepted as such a composer? The critics had never rendered that opinion of him. It was more than possible that his conducting the music between the acts might strike the audience as presumptuous. They

could laugh. They could boo. They could rise and walk out.

He went backstage and stuck his head into Howard Marsh's dressing room. "Howard," he said nervously, "I don't want to spoil anything by wishing you good luck, but I would like to leave my overcoat in your room. I think that may bring luck." He threw the coat inside and then went to his groups of singers and urged them to sing as they had never sung before. Oscar Bradley, the orchestra leader, asked him to go to the back of the house and test the acoustics, signaling to the conductor if the orchestra or singers were not balanced. "This is the first time in twenty-five years that a male chorus of forty voices has appeared in an operetta," Bradley said. "You want to see that they sound just right." Romberg promised to be in the back of the theatre to judge the balance.

He arrived there as the house lights lowered, and then, a moment later, Bradley appeared in the pit and there was a ripple of polite applause. There was no overture. A few bars of music led into the prologue and at the end of the prologue came the first big number, the duet between the young prince and his tutor, in which the old professor tries to tell the prince what Heidelberg stands for. The number was called 'Golden Days,' and Romberg, rigid as a man dead, listened to the song.

"Golden Days, in the sunshine of our youth,
Golden Days, full of innocence and full of truth . . ."

His thoughts refused to remain in the theatre. His mind filled with tumultuous memories. He was wakened by thunderous applause, which continued through the quick change into the first act, and then the stage was filled with the students, singing their rousing chorus.

"To the inn we're marching,
For our throats are parching,

Under fruit trees arching,
In the month of May . . ."

He had not been wrong. He could feel the audience warming to the ingenuous spirit of youth. He wanted to tell each of them that that was how it was, in Pecs, in Szeged, in Vienna. Then Kathie appeared with her hands grasping large mugs of beer and a Prohibition-dry audience broke into cheers. The cheers were caught on the stage as the students began their 'Drinking Song.'

"*Drink, drink, drink to eyes that are bright*
As stars when they're shining on me . . ."

The audience demanded two extra choruses of the 'Drinking Song.' In the rear of the theatre Romberg now was joined by J. J. Shubert and Dorothy Donnelly. The producer was still unconvinced that the operetta was not too highbrow but Dorothy hugged Romberg without restraint and whispered, "I think it's going, I think it's going." Nervously Romberg replied, "We will see. Let's wait a little longer."

Now Kathie and her prince were at their moonlight meeting. Quickly Romberg excused himself and hurried to the box where Lillian was seated. He slipped into a chair next to her and she held out her hand. It was icy. They watched the stage. The lovers were shy, hesitant. They did not know what to say to each other. They started their duet.

"*Deep in my heart, dear,*
I have a dream of you . . ."

In the box Romberg lifted Lillian's hand to his lips. "Deep in my heart, dear," he repeated to her. "I have my own dream of you. There is your love theme, Lillian. For better or worse, it's yours."

As the singers on the stage finished the other students dashed

out and gleefully broke up the lovers' kiss. They surrounded the prince and then Howard Marsh started the 'Serenade.'

"Overhead the moon is shining,
White as blossoms on the bough . . ."

Marsh hit the high C with the crystal clarity of a bell and the male chorus joined in for the finish. And then there was silence. And then the audience exploded into a frenzy of applause, shouting for encores, and as Romberg, back in the rear of the house again, leaned against the wall too weak even to ask Shubert whether he still thought the 'Serenade' should be removed, the producer smiled quizzically and asked, "How many seats did you buy for your friends for opening night? You must have bought half the house. This applause can't be on the level, or is it?"

During the intermission Romberg hid in a corner of the box office. He could not face anyone yet. The curtain rose for the second act and by then the audience was conquered. There was laughter for the snoring scene when the students fell asleep, and there were tears for the second act finale, which was Kathie's greatest moment in the show—when, the prince leaving, she realized that she would never see him again. It was a glorious introduction for Ilse Marvenga.

After the simplicity of costume and scenery in the preceding acts, the third act was a visual spellbinder, showing the pomp and splendor of the Royal Court. The action moved on to the dream, where the prince, alone on the stage, sees a vision of his beloved Kathie singing the reprise of 'Deep in My Heart,' and as the curtain fell slowly upon the prince shouting his defiant 'I will go back to Heidelberg!' there were not many dry eyes left in the house. Marsh was called back for four curtain calls after this scene, and then as he left the stage for the last time the audience shuffled in their seats and waited for the house lights to go on.

The house lights remained dimmed. And now Romberg began his slow walk down the aisle to the orchestra pit. There was no sound from the audience now. He could feel the eyes on him as he paced slowly down that seemingly endless corridor. He recognized the critics, at their usual aisle seats. Their faces were hidden with professional inscrutability.

Then he was on the podium. He looked at his musicians. He raised the stick and began the music for the entr'acte. Now his tensions of the last hour helped him. It was as though he had exhausted his nerves. The music, based on the theme of the 'Serenade,' reached out to a silent house. He thought of Sheldon for whom the music first was written. He thought of Lillian. The violins never sounded sweeter. There was an oboe solo in the middle, then the clarinetist took over, then the brass choir and then the strings again, playing the main theme, louder and louder. The whole orchestra was combined now and he whispered: "Dear God, I did everything I could. I tried very hard and if it is Your will that I continue to write the kind of music I despise, then let me fail. But don't You think I deserve better?" Now the timpani joined in a thundering finish. He lowered his stick. His head fell. Then, raising his eyes, he saw for the first time the actors and actresses standing in the wings, listening.

He wondered if he had an audience behind him still. He was answered in a moment. The cheers rolled down the theatre and for the first time in his life he heard his name shouted, "Bravo, Romberg, bravo, bravo, bravo, Romberg!"

XVI

THE cold wind from the Hudson whipped across the Dyckman Street ferry. Romberg, leaning against a railing, bit his fingers nervously.

"Do you know the way when we get to the other side?" Hugo asked.

"Yes," Sigmund said. "You've asked me that ten times. Of course I know the way. We have to go through Englewood and then we'll be picked up by a motorcycle escort and taken right into Paterson."

"Do you know how to get to Englewood? Where is Englewood?" Hugo asked.

"Just leave it to me," Sigmund said.

"The other four cars will be following you. You better know where you're going. The mayor doesn't want us to be late. He has his own career to worry about."

Sigmund glared at his brother and then tried to light a cigarette. It was too windy. He walked up and down the little deck, watching the land recede on the New York side. When the boat approached the New Jersey dock he climbed back into the car.

"Do you know how to go from here?" Lillian asked.

"Oh, for God's sake," Sigmund said.

"Nerves," Hugo murmured knowingly. "Nerves."

Lillian's eyes crinkled. "I'm glad you're nervous," she said softly. She touched his hand. "I was afraid that you would not be nervous at your wedding."

"Yes," Hugo said. "But does he know the way?"

The boat crashed into the pilings and then made fast to the dock and the gates were pushed back. The chauffeur started the limousine and the car rolled on shore, followed by the four other cars in the cavalcade. The date was March 28, 1925.

The procession went up the steep, twisting road to the summit of the Palisades and presently the five cars entered the outskirts of Englewood. There the chauffeur turned around and asked, "Where to now, sir?"

"You turn right at the next corner," Sigmund said authoritatively.

The chauffeur nodded and followed directions. The other four cars, filled with friends, trailed after them.

In a little while Sigmund said, "We ought to be picked up by the escort any time now."

A little later Sigmund said, "I guess they'll be just down the road."

A little later he ordered the chauffeur to stop the car and he spoke to a pedestrian. He learned that they were on a road which would bring them into Bear Mountain before very long.

"Turn around," Sigmund said. Then he looked at his brother. "And don't you say a damned word!"

It was just before noon that they were met by the police escort on the right road at last. They arrived at the city hall in Paterson, behind screaming sirens, just at noon.

The marriage was taking place in this semi-public manner because Isidore Witmark, Romberg's old friend and music publisher, was a close friend to an editor of a Paterson newspaper, and at the request of the editor had asked Romberg to allow the

mayor of Paterson to perform the ceremony. Without consulting Lillian, Romberg agreed.

With Hugo for his best man and Dorothy Donnelly as witness, he stood before the city official next to his bride while the newsreel cameras clicked and photographers startled Lillian with their flashpowder. The streets were jammed with people out for their lunch hour. The mayor announced at last that they were married and they thanked him and shook his hand and Sigmund kissed his wife in front of the cameras and repeated the kiss for the benefit of a photographer who arrived late and the spectators applauded and then as they ran back to the car they were showered with rice.

"At least there is one oldfashioned touch," Lillian said. "Bunny, you neglected one thing."

"What was that?"

"How is it that you didn't arrange to block off the square and charge admission?"

Late that evening, after a reception in the Plaza Hotel, they boarded the train that was taking them to French Lick, Indiana, for their honeymoon. The compartment was packed with friends who had followed them down from the hotel. Sigmund took his brother aside on the platform. "When do you leave now?"

"Next week."

He took Hugo's hand. "Hugo."

"I understand, Sigmund. I shall explain to them."

"I don't know whether I'm doing right or wrong," Sigmund said. "Please try to make it clear to them. Tell them that after ten years, ten years, they are finally coming to me, begging me to do the things I've wanted to do for so long. I know that Lillian and I should be going across with you but this is a crazy business. If I don't do the shows someone else will and I haven't got myself established well enough yet to go away."

"They'll understand," Hugo said gently.

"At least Father is getting better," Sigmund said. "I have tried twice now to persuade them to come over here. You see what you can do. If he is as well as Mother said in her last letter, surely he can make the trip. Cable me and we'll have everything ready, an apartment, a nurse, everything. Tell them we'll find a wonderful Austrian woman to take care of them."

"I will. And don't worry. You know what Father thinks about your music and how he wouldn't want you to hurt yourself on account of him."

Sigmund lit a cigarette and sighed. "What a weird life," he said. "For years now I've been pleading to be allowed to write decent music for decent shows. For years I've been stalled. I've written so many songs I've forgotten half of them. And now, because of one show, everything is changed. Now they come to me and beg me to write operettas. Operettas! Now I'm a serious composer." He smiled wryly. "I'm the same man, Hugo. Whatever talent I have is the same talent I had last year and five years ago. But now I'm suddenly too valuable for the trashy revues and I'm good for operettas. It's pretty crazy, isn't it?"

His brother said. "I'll make it clear to them, Sigmund. They will understand, I promise you."

"And you'll bring them back with you?"

"I will try."

"Tell them that I send them so much love, so much, and that my wife, whom they've never seen, sends her love. And stay as long as you can and don't worry about the expense. And God bless you, Hugo."

The time for departure arrived and their friends said their final farewells and then the train rolled out of the station.

"Are we alone?" Lillian asked.

"I think so."

"Look around and make sure." Then she said. "I should like

to kiss you. I should like to kiss a brand-new husband. Alone."

"I'm sorry everything was so hectic," he offered.

"I loved it," she said. "God only knows why, but I loved it."

2.

It was as he had told his brother. It was as though he had stepped into another world entirely. Less than a year ago it had been considered quite reasonable by his producers to ask him to tinker with any production they had scheduled. Nothing had been too unimportant, too trivial. But now, with 'The Student Prince' not only playing to packed houses on Broadway but with nine companies of the operetta touring the United States, crossing and recrossing road companies of 'Blossom Time,' with the Ziegfeld production of 'Louis the 14th' starring Leon Errol another impressive success, he suddenly was Sigmund Romberg, composer of operettas, and the subtle change in his status was nowhere better indicated than in the fact that 'The Student Prince' now was always referred to as a 'Romberg' show. Until then the shows were always Shubert productions, with music by Romberg.

His producers found another staff composer for their routine productions. To Romberg they assigned another spectacular operetta, a musical version of the popular play 'The Prisoner of Zenda,' to be called 'Princess Flavia.'

On the face of it the new operetta should have been a natural, something as potentially great as the Heidelberg story. Romberg took the script with great enthusiasm and went to Atlantic City with Lillian for the summer months to work on the score. He returned from a long walk on the boardwalk one afternoon to find Lillian had finished the script. "What do you think of it?" he asked.

She hesitated. Then she said, "Bunny, this isn't my business, but I don't think it's good."

He sat down. "Why not?"

"There is only one love scene in the entire show and that takes place in the last scene of the last act. How can you write music for a romantic operetta with a love scene—the only love scene—just before the final curtain?"

"Well, this is a play of action and 'The Student Prince' was a play of emotion," he said. "They're two different things entirely."

"Bunny, you asked for my opinion. I wouldn't argue with you otherwise. You wrote beautiful music for 'The Student Prince.' But you also had a wonderful story, a wonderful, beautiful story. Anyone who ever was young and in love—and that means everyone—became part of that story when they saw that show. This is different. It's exciting and it's spectacular and it's full of color—but it's cold. It's so cold I don't think even your music can warm it." Then she flushed. "I'm sorry, Bunny," she said. "I don't know much about these things. The Shuberts have been in business a long time and they must know what they're doing."

There was an odd expression on his face as he replied. "No, Bunny, you're absolutely right. And your judgment is extraordinarily acute." He grinned. "Brilliant as well as beautiful. Darling, what a lucky man I am!"

"Silly."

"It's none of my business, I guess," he went on. "I'm not producing, just writing music. But I agree with you. I think this story is essentially wrong and it can't be changed without altering the entire book. And it's just as important to have a good book as it is to have good music." He got up and walked up and down. "I met a couple of fellows the other day. You may have heard of them, Lawrence Schwab and Frank Mandel. They're asking me to write an operetta with Oscar Hammerstein. The more I see of 'Princess Flavia' the better their proposition sounds to me." He looked at her tenderly. "Your reaction to that story is so right," he said.

Whatever objections he had to 'Princess Flavia' he had to admit the producers were not being niggardly in staging it. They put a fortune into the epic musical drama. There were some one hundred and twenty-five persons on the stage and the costumes were breathtaking. There was a coronation scene, a riot, an uprising, a magnificent sword duel. The story was exciting, but, as Lillian had observed, it lacked wholly the basic simplicity which had made 'The Student Prince' so beloved.

He never forgot the evening he had presented 'The Student Prince' to Edward Sheldon in Sheldon's penthouse. Instead of just playing the score on the piano he had brought the three principals, Kathie, the prince, and Dr. Engel, the tutor, to the home of the bedridden man, together with sixteen members of the male chorus.

When Sheldon, still hidden by bandages, still flat on his back, had heard the 'Serenade,' which he recognized as the song first written for him, he had said, quietly: "The most difficult thing for a writer or composer to do is to express emotion simply. You have succeeded. I beg you to retain that simplicity as long as you write."

Later Sheldon had begun to talk of great love stories of the past and they listened to his soft, musical voice as he said, "The most important thing is for a play to have a good basic love story." Then he had said, "Romy, some day I hope that my play 'Romance' is made into a musical, and when it is, I pray that you do it."

He thought of Sheldon's words as he watched 'Princess Flavia' progress through rehearsals. When the operetta opened in November his fears were realized. The critics were pleased with the music but called the turn on the book.

With the new show evidently less than a success, his spirits, mercurial as always, fell again. From the heights of ecstasy following the reception accorded 'The Student Prince,' he plunged

into gloom. And it did not help that at this time Hugo returned from Belisce with the news that while his father was not getting worse he still was not fit to make a journey to New York. He needed additional medical care, Hugo reported; Sigmund had to provide the money. His own expenses, establishing a suitable home for Lillian and himself, were not inconsiderable. And he was still paying off his creditors on the old $30,000 debt he took over from the defunct firm of Wilner and Romberg.

There was destined to be little income from 'Princess Flavia.' What he needed was another success like 'The Student Prince' to give him enough reserve to take care of the needs of his parents, his own needs, and still allow him enough to take the necessary time out for a trip to Europe. One of the happy notes in Hugo's report was that his father had seemed to take strength from the printed music of 'The Student Prince' which Sigmund had sent to him with his brother. "He read the music day after day," Hugo said. "Just as though it were a book. I think he could transcribe that music by heart now."

Then Sigmund was assigned to collaborate with his old friend, Dorothy Donnelly, on a new operetta based on the legend of Barbara Frietchie. "They're calling it 'My Maryland,' " he told Lillian with returned enthusiasm. "I have luck with Dorothy. This may be a humdinger."

3.

The producer looked at the sheet of paper. "I hate anything that starts with 'whereas,' " he said. He read from the document. "Whereas, the authors, composers and dramatists have certain grievances which they are unable to correct individually.' " He looked at Dorothy Donnelly and Romberg. "What grievances did you ever have with me, Romberg, that we couldn't settle individually?"

"It isn't for people like Romberg," Dorothy said fiercely. "It's for the others, the ones who aren't big enough to settle their grievances individually. Of course Romberg can settle his own affairs now."

"Why are you worrying about the rest of the world?" the producer asked mildly. Then he went on reading. " 'Now, therefore, we the undersigned, in meeting assembled, do associate ourselves together, to consider what steps, if any, can be taken for our mutual protection and to promote our common welfare.' " He paused again. "There are some pretty good names under this," he said. "Jerry Kern. Gershwin. Irving Berlin. Dick Rodgers. Gene Buck. Oscar Hammerstein. And Sigmund Romberg. All representing the composers and lyric writers on the board." He placed the paper carefully on his desk and looked up. "And what do you expect me to do about this?" he asked.

"Nothing yet, J. J.," Romberg said. "But when the Dramatists' Guild is organized we are going to set up a basic contract for composers, authors, and playwrights. The producers will be asked to agree at the very least to the terms of that basic contract."

"And if a producer refuses?" Shubert asked.

"No member of the Guild will be permitted to be connected in any way with any production of that producer," Dorothy said.

"I see," Shubert said. "And that means breach of contract."

"Not at all, J. J.," Romberg said. "Committments that have already been made will be kept. But no new committments will be made with any producer until he agrees to the terms of the basic contract."

Shubert held his fingers together. "And how many pledges do you have for this Guild?"

"Thirty," Romberg said.

"Thirty," the producer repeated.

"But there will be more," Dorothy cut in.

Shubert rose to his feet. "It is nothing, in any case, that has to be decided now. Romberg, you and I have a contract for 'My Maryland' and for 'Cherry Blossoms.' I expect you to keep your side of the bargain."

"I'm quite prepared to do that, J. J.," Romberg said. Then he said eagerly. "Don't try to buck this, J. J. It's going to go through. It's inevitable. Eventually it will help everyone, all around, producers included. Actors' Equity started out just like this, with the producers fighting it. But look at it today. Everyone, every single producer, yourself included, knows that show business is better off for Actors' Equity. And we are entitled to the same thing. We've had a fine relationship for a long time, and I've got no kicks coming. But there are others. If some of us who can stand on our own feet didn't hold out our hands to the newcomers, *they*'d never be able to get anywhere."

"There has been show business around town for a long time without a Dramatists' Guild," Shubert said.

"I know. I'm not mentioning any names, J. J. I don't have to. You know the producers I mean as well as I do. You know some of the stuff that's being pulled around town. Shows, plays, music, picked up from hard-up authors and composers for next to nothing. Bought outright for peanuts. You know there have been men who have stood outside a theatre where some smash hit they wrote was playing to packed houses and they didn't have the price of admission. You know that producers around this town have bought shows for next to nothing and then have turned around and sold them to the movies for fabulous prices, with the writer getting nothing out of it. Well, that's ancient history, J. J. Times change. And this is one of the changes. There is no need for us to quarrel. But I just want to assure you that this thing is going through, and all—I say all—the producers will have to agree or they just won't get any material."

Within a few weeks the thirty pledges had quadrupled, and in four months after the Guild first was organized in December, 1925, every Broadway producer had signed the basic Guild contract, with the single exception of the Shuberts. The brothers declared an open war on the Guild and went to court for an injunction, charging secondary boycott.

Apart from the difficulties with the producers, working on the show with Dorothy was a pleasure. By then the two of them understood each other perfectly and there was no conflict between writer and composer. He wrote some numbers which pleased him, among them 'Silver Moon,' 'Your Land and My Land,' and a song called 'Mother' which was more important to him than any of the others. The song was written for Barbara Frietchie at the time when she was pleading with her father not to throw her Yankee lover, who was lying wounded upstairs, out of their house, and in order to soften him.

"Mother, mother, faithful, sweet and dear,
Mother, mother, were you only here . . ."

For some inexplicable reason, as he fashioned the music for that song, he could think only of the last time he had seen his parents, in the spa at Baden bei Wien. He remembered putting his mother and father on their train for Belisce, and he taking the Ahlberg Express to Switzerland and the thoughts that filled his mind then.

'My Maryland' opened in Atlantic City with the fight between the Guild and the Shuberts becoming increasingly bitter. From Atlantic City it moved to Philadelphia for what was scheduled to be a two- or three-week run, depending on business, just long enough, at all events, to shake down for the Broadway opening. Business was so good in Philadelphia that the producers were reluctant to take it away. Until the show opened on Broadway

Romberg was unable to leave the country, needing to be on hand for whatever changes might be necessary at the last minute.

From week to week he waited for 'My Maryland' to close in Philadelphia and open in New York, but the operetta was kept in the Quaker City, as business there, instead of falling off, grew better each week. In the end, 'My Maryland' played for the unprecedented length of eleven full months in Philadelphia before it opened on Broadway.

As he waited, week after week, for the show to be brought to New York, the Guild situation with the Shuberts worsened steadily. At last he had to break away from them and entered into an agreement to write an operetta with Oscar Hammerstein and Otto Harbach. Schwab and Mandel were the producers and the new operetta was called 'My Lady Fair.'

4.

He could see it on her face when he entered the apartment. "What is it, Lillian?"

"A cable arrived a little while ago," she said quietly.

"My father?"

"Yes. Oh, darling, try to remember he was a very old man."

"Is my mother all right?"

"The cable did not say."

He sat down heavily and closed his eyes. "Bunny," she whispered to him. "Listen to me. You are telling yourself that you should have returned home when you promised. That can't be changed now. Perhaps you should have. It is so easy to be wise afterward. But you can't change anything now. The only one to think about now is your mother. You must see to it that she is brought to this country immediately."

He looked at her tenderly. "You're quite a person, Bunny," he said.

"Let us send a cable immediately. To your mother and to your friend Ernoe. We have little time to waste now." She went to his desk briskly and returned with a sheet of paper and a pencil. "Write the messages right now. I'll telephone them to the cable office."

He smiled wanly. "All right," he said. Then he said: "I can see his hands now. Isn't that funny? All I can see are those slender fingers and the way he put his cigar down when he sat before the piano. And the cigar had to be kept alive while he played because if it went out he would never relight it."

A week later he received a letter from his mother in which she told him she had been so ill she had not been able to attend the funeral. He cabled Ernoe again and asked him to take his mother to a private sanitarium in Vienna where she could be strengthened enough to stand the trip to America. Now long afterward Ernoe cabled him that his mother was in the rest home and had improved considerably. He wrote to her that he would be in Vienna the following spring to bring her to New York during the warm months when the crossing would be smoothest.

He went to work eagerly on 'My Lady Fair,' thinking, among other things, that if the schedule worked out right and the show were the success he hoped it would be, it would be playing in New York when he returned with his mother and that it would be the first of his shows that she would see.

He found working with Hammerstein sheer delight. The tall, gangly writer was something of a phenomenon. He would dash off page after page of the book of the play, writing as fast as anyone Romberg had ever seen. But when he started on the lyrics for songs he became another man, working slowly, painstakingly. He would finish an act in a day or two and then take weeks to write the lyrics.

The Romberg-Hammerstein cooperation was faultless. Romberg, after studying the book, began to improvise. When he was ready for Hammerstein, the writer stood by the piano and listened. Romberg would play a tune, saying, "This is for the first scene." Hammerstein would listen. When Romberg finished he would say, "I like it. Give it to me, I'll see what words I can figure out." Or another time he would say, simply, "I don't like it." The music would be discarded and Romberg would answer, "Well, I have another tune for this spot. Listen to this." And this time, perhaps, Hammerstein would buy it.

Then the tall writer would disappear. A week later, two weeks perhaps, he would return. "How do you like these words," he would say. He would read them as Romberg played the music. When he finished, Romberg would say, "It fits." The song was then ready to give to the singers. On the few occasions when the words didn't quite 'fit' Hammerstein took them away with him again. The second time they always fit.

The two men became warm friends but their actual collaboration consisted of no more than the casual 'I like it,' or 'I don't like it,' and 'It fits,' or 'It doesn't fit.'

The operetta opened in October in Wilmington, Delaware, and on that first night it seemed that everything that could possibly happen to throw a show, happened. There was a fuse blowout to start with and for a while it did not seem if there would be any lights for the show. Then in the second act one of the beams in the ceiling broke under the weight of the scenery and the scenery crashed down. In the last scene of that act the comedian was supposed to make his appearance on a mule. The animal, waiting backstage, was so intrigued by the music he brayed his own accompaniment, plainly audible to the audience in the front.

Romberg threw up his hands. "What else in God's name can happen to this show?" he demanded.

Lillian chuckled. "It's a good omen, Bunny," she said. "This show is going to be one of the great ones."

"If you can see that," he grumbled, "you can see a lot more than I can!"

Despite all the mishaps, the first-night audience appeared to like the show. In the usual post-opening conferences, the producers decided to change the title to 'The Desert Song.' The music, which included 'One Alone,' 'The Riff Song,' and 'Romance' was well received by the audience. The theme song, Romberg decided, was weak, and in two days he wrote another waltz which was set to words by Hammerstein and which was called 'The Desert Song,' but which soon came to be known by another name, 'Blue Heaven.'

Starring in the operetta were Robert Halliday, Eddie Buzzell, and Romberg's old protegee, Vivienne Segal, who had been taken, a frightened young girl from a school of music, and turned into a star overnight in 'Blue Paradise,' more than eleven years before, and who now was one of the great names in show business. Before the Broadway opening, on November 30, Vivienne said to Romberg, "I doubt that I will need anyone to frighten me half to death tonight."

"It was a good trick, though," he grinned.

"It was something," she admitted.

The new waltz stole the show.

"Blue heaven and you and I,
And sand kissing a moonlit sky,
A desert breeze whisp'ring a lullaby,
Only stars above you,
To see I love you . . ."

Most of the music seemed well received as the play unfolded, but the general reaction of the New York audience was disappoint-

ing. Criticism, the next day, was lukewarm, and the staff involved wondered just where the show had gone wrong. For the first few weeks business was off and Romberg's fears returned.

" 'Blossom Time' was Schubert's," he said to Lillian bitterly. " 'My Maryland' hasn't opened in New York and God only knows when it will. Who ever heard of a show getting stuck in Philadelphia? 'Flavia' was a flop. And now this. My God, am I destined to be a one-show composer?"

"This is a good one, Bunny," she said.

"The customers don't think so."

"It's a good one," she repeated. "It's too early to tell."

"It doesn't have the feel of success."

"You have $10,000 invested in it," she said. "Tell you what I'll do. I'll buy your share of the show. That's how much faith I have in it."

"Buy it? I wouldn't cheat you. I'll give it to you. From this moment on *you* have the $10,000 invested in 'Desert Song.' Now I'm a happy man!"

The English rights to the operetta were bought soon after the inauspicious opening and Lillian got a return on her investment. Then one afternoon he burst into the apartment and announced that Warner Brothers had just bought the rights to the operetta.

"What does that mean to you?" she asked. "They made a picture of 'The Student Prince' but there's no music in the movies."

"Bunny, Bunny," he said. "Don't you read the newspapers? If you're going to be in show business you got to keep up. Haven't you heard about sound pictures?"

"Of course I've heard about them." Then her eyes widened. "You mean they're going to—"

"They are going to make a screen musical of 'The Desert Song.' A musical. That means sound. With the music."

"Do they make such things?" she asked, still disbelieving.

"They haven't. This is the first. But they will, Bunny, from now on they will!"

The Broadway production limped along painfully for a month, playing to a weak holiday crowd, and then, as though by some miracle, caught on and suddenly developed into a hit. Thereafter it played to capacity houses for a year and soon had a company on the road and another on the West Coast.

"So you've made a small fortune out of the $10,000 investment," he said. "Now I'm married to a wealthy woman."

"I told you this one was going to be good," she said.

"How did you guess?"

"I can tell things. Like Broadway shows and when it's going to rain and which horse is going to win the Derby. Little things like that."

5.

He started immediately on the last production owed the Shuberts, 'Cherry Blossoms,' based on an original play by his old friend, Benrimo, called 'The Willow Tree.' He tried to hurry things along as much as he could to clear the decks for his spring trip to Vienna with his wife. Every week he received a letter from his mother and the tone was increasingly cheerful. It appeared that Clara Romberg was looking forward to the trip as much as he was.

He returned home one evening and discovered the furniture had been moved around. Lillian slipped her arm under his. "Come with me, Bunny," she said. "I've got something to show you."

She led him to what had been furnished as a second living room, an informal room for entertainment. He peered into the room. It now was furnished with two beds, two dressers, several easy chairs. "This will be your mother's room," Lillian said.

"I've got it arranged so that the nurse can live right with her. I've got a line on a nurse, by the way, a woman who speaks German. Look, Bunny, your mother can sit here, with this little table for her magazines. I've got a good light behind her so she won't strain her eyes. She will have all the privacy she wants here. Perhaps she will even want to write again. We can engage a secretary for her to take dictation. Do you suppose we can find a secretary who can take German dictation?"

"Lillian," he said, his voice getting a little choked.

"I want to have everything ready so that there will be nothing to do when we bring her here. She won't want to think she is in the way here and if we started to fix up a room for her after she comes here she'll think she's crowding us."

He was seated in the theatre a week later, reviewing one of the final rehearsals for 'Cherry Blossoms,' when a cable was handed to him. He opened it idly, thinking it had to do with the London production of 'The Desert Song.' With the open cable in his hand, still unread, he called out to the singer on the stage that she had to speed up the tempo of the song. Then he glanced at the message. It was a notification that his mother had died suddenly in the Viennese sanitarium. He excused himself and went home.

When Lillian opened the door she said, "There's a letter from your mother, Bunny. It came this afternoon."

"She's dead," he said.

The letter, written and mailed a week before she died, was a fitting testament from a woman who had, through her life, a genuine talent for poetic expression. He read the letter slowly, translating it for his wife as he went along, when his blurred eyes permitted him to make out the writing.

It was plain to them now that Clara Romberg never had intended to come to America. "I could not leave your father alone

here," she wrote. "He is still here, to me, as much as he ever was, and I could not go away from him now any more than I could have if he were still alive. I would be unable to rest quietly separated from him by so much distance. We were never apart, you know, and it is too late now to change habits which were formed over so many years."

She felt, she wrote, that she would be a burden on her children if she went to that strange land. Her life, she said, ended the day her husband died, and she now was merely awaiting whatever time had to pass before she would join him.

"Please don't mourn for me," he read slowly, "but instead give thanks to the Almighty for the many years He permitted me to spend with your father, years of such happiness that few on this earth have been so blessed. I feel now that it is cruel that we are not together still, your father and I, and since he went on ahead of me to some other place, I can only hope that it will not be too long before I find him again. I feel that it will happen soon, since God Who gave us so many years of happiness together will not now fail my prayers.

"There is nothing left for me now. There is only pain. My illness cannot be cured even with all the attention you have so lovingly provided for me. The sun is setting for me now. It is just rising for you. You will know that so long as you live my love will be with you and your wife, whom God never intended for me to meet."

XVII

He stared into the fog-opaque night without speaking for a long while, and then he turned back to the fire and held out his hands. The sounds that came in from the London streets seemed themselves thickened with fog.

"So," he said at last, "now you've seen Belisce. How easy it was to do, after all. Just walk out on the rehearsal and get on a boat. Nothing happened. The world didn't end. The show went on rehearsing. Why couldn't I have done that before it was too late?" The flickering fire in the hotel room made shadows on his face. There were new tired lines there. "Why do we always need a tragedy to make us do the things we should? For years I've been promising my parents that I would return home and for years one thing or another seemed to prevent me. But when it was too late to do any good nothing at all prevented me. I could have walked out on a rehearsal a year ago or two years ago and found them alive, waiting for me."

"They found a great deal of happiness in your music," she said, trying to say something, feeling there was nothing she could say.

"It would be nice to think that," he said. "But I think they would have exchanged a little of the music for a little more of

Hugo and me." His face filled with pain. "To think, my darling, that my mother and father never met you, never knew you. How happy you would have made them! How they would have loved you!"

"There is such a thing, Bunny, as destiny," she said. "It's not very original for me to point that out, but it's true. It was meant to be this way and there is nothing we can do about it. The lives of everybody who ever lived would have been different if each person could know things at the beginning that he knows later on. It is a very sad thing that we had to postpone returning to your home until now, but that's the way it was. Recriminations won't change that. You were a good son to your mother and father in many, many ways. It wasn't your fault or theirs that your life led you away from them."

The return to Belisce had been walking backward into the past. He had cabled Ernoe immediately upon learning of his mother's death, and had asked him to see to it that her body was not buried in Vienna, but, instead, placed in a vault so that he could bring it to Belisce and bury her next to his father. When they arrived in Vienna he learned the request had come too late.

He argued with Viennese officials vainly. He brought pressure to bear without success. At last, aided by the combined offices of the United States and British consulates, he finally obtained permission to disinter the body and bring it to Belisce, now three countries away from Austria.

There his mother was at last put to rest next to his father, her casket carried by solemn-faced members of the Belisce volunteer fire department. The entire village surrounded the grave and bared their heads in final salute to a very dear friend. The Russian choir which he had always remembered so vividly sang a dirge and one of the factory foreman uttered a brief prayer, and an old friend of the family said a few words. Then the choir

sang again and the dirt was thrown on the casket and Clara Romberg was joined again with her husband.

After the ceremony, Lillian and Romberg walked through the village. Here and there men and women greeted them, calling Sigmund by name. He showed her everything, the little houses, the hotel, the stores, the Gutmann chateau, the tiny railroad station with its toy train. In the late afternoon there was a light fall of snow and before their eyes the little dwellings were covered and the streets soon were glistening white.

"It's like a little picture-postcard," she said. "It's like an illustration out of a book. These simple people, these tiny homes, the lights coming through the little windows, the smoke curling up. I feel as though I'm stepping into the pages of a fairy tale." They walked along. "You know, Bunny, I think I understand you so much better now that I see this little village. I don't quite know how to say it, but I think now that when you write some of your simple music you are not even talking to a Broadway audience. You are talking to these people, these men and women you have known all your life. I believe I can understand that emotion better now. How much I would have given to have known your parents, living in this town out of the past."

That evening, in the Gutmann chateau, with his old friends, Ernoe, Otto, and Victor, he talked long into the night. "I don't think I'm unhappy now," he said. "I remember my mother's last letter to me. I think the love between my mother and father was so strong she never really would have been happy with us in America. I think I felt that most of all when I saw the faces of all the hundreds of persons who had known my mother and father so well. I realized this afternoon at the cemetery that my mother's place was at home, just as that tree that stands in front of their house belongs there. She once wrote that tree could die and be removed but it never could be transplanted."

They spent the next day wandering through Sigmund's child-

hood home. There was his mother's chair and next to it on a small table was her sewing basket with some unfinished work. On another little table next to the chair where Adam Romberg always read the paper in the evening was a pipe belonging to his father, and he thought with a start that he had not known his father had taken to smoking a pipe.

"Come here, Bunny," Lillian said. She was at the piano. On the piano was the music for 'The Student Prince.' On the piano too, in a neat pile, were some unpublished writings of his mother. They found old tintypes of his parents, of their parents, of Hugo and himself taken when they were children. In a book filled with dates he found something that caused him to call to her in great excitement. "Look, I never knew this. It says here that my mother and father were married in Nagy Kanisza on March 28, 1886—and that's the same day of the same month we were married—let me see, just thirty-nine years later!"

His feelings, as he walked through the house, was that it all was gone now, and had to be forgotten. He wanted to take nothing back to New York with him save a few personal mementoes. To his amazement Lillian took the opposite stand. Before the day was out she had broken down in tears and she pleaded with him to send this thing and that one back to the United States. In the end there were several cartons of things which had belonged to his parents shipped to New York. "I can't help it, Bunny," she said. "I shall never stop regretting that I didn't know these two people who lived in a world such as this. I wouldn't let these mementoes out of my hands for anything."

He invited old family friends to come to the house and take whatever was left. He gave the piano to the employees' club at the factory and sent the family silverware to New York. The next day he went to Osiek with Ernoe and opened his father's safe-deposit box. There they found what had once been a small fortune in Imperial bonds, securities, and savings, as well as a prewar

life insurance policy naming his two sons as beneficiaries. The attorney computed the value of the papers in current terms and it was learned that Adam Romberg, who had saved and invested judiciously all his long life, had left an estate amounting to just about ten dollars.

When they left Belisce for the last time, after he had established a fund to care for the graves in perpetuity, he sank into the train seat and said, "How different it would have been. Oh, Lillian, how different it would have been!" Then he said, "And now we have to go to London and I have to try to put this out of my mind and concentrate on a show. Isn't that funny, Bunny?"

In the English capital, Romberg was joined by Oscar Hammerstein and Frank Mandel for the London opening of 'The Desert Song' in the Drury Lane Theatre, and his mind soon was challenged by the differences between London and Broadway production.

Managing director of the Drury Lane Theatre was a clipped-voice aristocrat named Sir Alfred Butt, who was quite a change from the Broadway producers Romberg knew. Chairman of the board was another nobleman, Lord Lurgen, and the differences presented by the personalities of these two men alone were enough to keep him on his toes. The chief conductor of the theatre orchestra was someone the three Americans could more readily understand: Herman Fink, a composer in his own right, short, fat, round-faced, wearing huge glasses which constantly slipped to the end of his nose, wild-haired and noted for the voracity of his appetite. They could always relax with Herman.

The physical appearance of the famous theatre was striking. It reminded Romberg of a smaller edition of the Metropolitan Opera House. There was an unusually large orchestra pit in which at least fifty musicians could be seated. Boxes surrounded the stalls in horseshoe form, with the royal box, properly ornate,

in the center. The box reserved for the Prince of Wales was located close to the stage on the left. There was a first and second balcony and above that the gallery.

The operetta 'Rose Marie,' whose book and lyrics were written by Harbach and Hammerstein, was currently on the boards and rehearsals for 'The Desert Song' had to be fitted in between performances of the other show. Since all the scenery for the production was being constructed in the theatre cellar and was custom-made just for the Drury Lane stage, the operetta could not break in on the road. In lieu of the normal out-of-town tryout, the authors decided to have five complete dress rehearsals before the formal opening, and it also was decided that Romberg himself would conduct the orchestra for the opening.

2.

Outside the hotel room the slow drizzle continued. The rainfall was so fine it was just as though the air were filled with thin water. It couldn't be seen, as drops, but just permeated the air, damply and clammily. He closed his eyes again and tried to find his way back to sleep. But Lillian said brightly, "Bunny, it's six-fifteen. Time to get up."

"My God," he groaned. "Who the devil wants to see a horse race on a morning like this? I'm going back to sleep."

"You are in England," she explained, as though to a child. "In England you have to do the things Englishmen do. Besides, you promised Sir Alfred."

"I only promised to get out a show," he said grumpily.

"This is part of getting out a show in England," she said. "Now if it were Spain it would be a bullfight and you wouldn't have to go until the afternoon. Why didn't you sell the show to a Spanish producer?"

"A comedienne. I married a comedienne. Jokes in the middle

of the night." He got up. "All right, all right. But tell me this: how can you see horses run in this fog?"

"Ask the horses," she said sweetly. "Ask them how they see to run. They're the ones who ought to be complaining. But perhaps it is not foggy in Liverpool. It is Liverpool you are going to, isn't it?" Then she went back to sleep.

He dressed in the chilly room and asked himself how he had managed to get roped in for this one. It was during the first week of rehearsal and Sir Alfred had invited the three American authors to attend the Grand National as his guests. The idea had seemed lovely and British when it first was broached; the day before, Sir Alfred's secretary had handed him a slip of paper instructing him to meet Sir Alfred at the station at seven o'clock the next morning.

He dressed slowly, putting on an extra sweater, two pairs of sox. Then he twisted a heavy muffler around his neck and left for the depot. He found his co-authors in as dreary a frame of mind as he was. Sir Alfred, on the other hand, was chipper as a bird. Soon after the train pulled out breakfast was served, as Sir Alfred had promised it would be. Romberg began to brighten a bit. Breakfast turned out to be hot tea and cold ham.

During the ride Sir Alfred maintained a steady conversation, giving the history of the famous steeplechase, naming past winners, recounting anecdotes. The mist turned into a steady drizzle, the drizzle into a rain, and the rain, finally, into an honest downpour. Lunch was served; it consisted of cold ham and hot tea.

"I'll have a bottle of beer," Romberg said.

"There is no beer," the train steward said. "Some more tea, sir?"

"Thank you," he said.

"Is there any chance that the race might be called off on account of rain?" Hammerstein asked. Hopefully.

Sir Alfred laughed goodnaturedly. "No, nothing stops the steeplechase. A little water just adds to the zest, just adds to the zest."

"Just adds to the zest," Romberg repeated morosely.

The train stopped. "We are not far from the track now," Sir Alfred said, his voice tingling with excitement. "We'll hike it the rest of the way."

Not far from the track turned out to be a half-mile. They trudged the half-mile through mud. Presently, through the rain, the main gate loomed before them.

"I have a special box here," Sir Alfred said. "It is rather bad about the rain but then who cares about rain when you are witnessing the Grand National, eh?"

A wooden stairway led to the roof of the grandstand. Sir Alfred led them up the stairs. His box was on the roof in the open. "The view is frightfully good, isn't it?" Sir Alfred said.

They sat on the soaking chairs for about fifteen minutes under the torrential downfall of water and then Sir Alfred said, "Oh, I say, let's go down and see the famous water hurdle. It's quite a sight if you've never seen it before."

"I would be interested in seeing anything having to do with water," Romberg said.

They trooped down the staircase again and sloshed through the mud across the track and arrived at a body of water the size of a small lake. "Isn't that marvelous?" Sir Alfred said.

"Colossal," Mandel agreed.

They stood there for five minutes staring at the puddle. Then Hammerstein said, "How about placing some bets?"

They went to the betting booths and Romberg bought tickets on sixteen horses, which represented approximately half the starters. "I want a fifty-fifty chance at least," he said.

Now they returned to the unprotected box and again seated themselves in the rain, which, if anything, was increasing. The

first and second races were run. Finally the big race took place, and when it was finished Romberg ascertained that not a single one of his sixteen horses had placed. He half-rose to go, but Sir Alfred informed them that there were still other races to come.

At a convenient moment when Sir Alfred was explaining something or other about a race being held and his two friends were politely straining their eyes trying to follow him, Romberg slipped away. He trudged back to the railroad car and thanked his good fortune in having remembered to buy a detective story before he left London. He went back into the private compartment and called the steward. He learned that he now was able to get a drink. He ordered three double scotch and sodas, took off his shoes, overcoat, and dripping hat. He soon was out of pain.

When Sir Alfred and his two friends appeared, sometime later, he beamed at them. "Hello, gentlemen," he said. "Is it wet out?"

"I was quite worried about you," Sir Alfred said. "Don't you like horses?"

"Didn't I tell you?" Romberg asked, ringing for more scotch. "I'm an infantryman myself."

3.

When the curtain was lowered on the first dress rehearsal of the operetta, it was realized that something had gone wrong. Largely due to the size of the stage, the second-act finale lacked a punch. Sir Alfred pursed his lips and furrowed his brow. Then he said, "I think I have it. I think we can bolster up the finale a little bit." He rubbed his chin. "I think it can be done," he said.

"What can be done?" Mandel asked.

"The Coldstream Guards band. That would do it," Sir Alfred said.

"The Coldstream Guards band?" Romberg asked. "I thought they were reserved for royalty!"

"No, I think I can get them," Sir Alfred said, warming to his idea. "We can dress them in proper costumes and use them in the big scene that closes the second act. They can play the marching music. By Jove, I think it would be a startler!"

"Can you get them?" Hammerstein asked dubiously.

"I think so, gentlemen, I think so. Now why didn't I think of this before?"

In fact, the next day Sir Alfred managed to get to someone who gave him permission to use the famous regimental band in the show. All that afternoon the band rehearsed the music and the players were ready for the second dress rehearsal that night.

Romberg, conducting the orchestra, gave the cue at the proper moment, and the band, offstage, began to play immediately, as they were required to do, and then marched onto the stage. Romberg, waving his stick, listened for a few moments and then stopped the rehearsal. The band had played the brisk march in its own traditional tempo, and had changed the lively music almost into a funeral dirge.

"Gentlemen," Romberg said. "Please try to remember that for the time being you are not the Coldstream Guards band, but instead, a band of French Legionnaires. From the time of Napoleon, the French march to a faster tempo. Now, if you please, we will start again at the moment where you begin to play. And please, gentlemen, much faster this time!"

The band went offstage and were again cued. Again they played the march too slowly. Three times Romberg stopped the rehearsal and pleaded with the men to play faster, but it was impossible to change the musical habits of so many years. The musicians simply could not speed up their timing.

After the fourth failure, Romberg said to Sir Alfred, "I think the idea for the Coldstream Guards band was a great flash, but a

flash in the wrong place. I don't think we'll be able to use them."

The manager was visibly distressed. "I say, Romberg, don't you think with a little more rehearsing they'll be able to catch on?"

"I know musicians, Sir Alfred," Romberg said. "They're the same the world over. The boys in that band think in a certain tempo and a thousand rehearsals won't change them."

Herman Fink, the orchestra leader, nodded in agreement.

"This is going to be frightfully embarrassing," Sir Alfred said.

"What is?"

"Well, you see, old boy, it was something of a distinct honor to get permission for the Coldstream Guards to play for us and it will be taken very poorly if we—ah—fire them. National honor and all that, you know. It will be taken as a criticism of their musical ability. Very old band, you know, lots of honors."

The three authors and the manager considered glumly how they could dismiss the band without offending the pride of the British Empire. The things that happen in show business, Romberg thought. Then Mandel looked up hopefully.

"Isn't Herman Fink president of the London Musicians' Union?" he asked.

"Yes," Sir Alfred said. "But what has that to do with it?"

"Well, why not have Herman, in his capacity of union leader, protest about having non-union musicians playing in the show? He could even threaten a strike if the guardsmen aren't removed and replaced with good union men."

"That is an excellent suggestion," Sir Alfred said enthusiastically.

"Now just a moment," said Herman.

"Thank you, Mandel," Sir Alfred said. "Herman, go somewhere and write a letter of protest. My secretary will take your dictation."

4.

Sir Alfred was a Member of Parliament and he saw in the last dress rehearsal a chance to do something for his loyal constituents. He invited them by the hundreds to attend. Lord Lurgen used the rehearsal for similar social purposes. For the last performance before the formal opening, consequently, the house was filled to the last seat. It was a formal, stately gathering in evening dress.

As the moment approached to start the rehearsal, Romberg's fears increased. Eliminating the Coldstream Guards had corrected that situation, but the original dragginess still existed. The show still lacked wallop and nothing he had been able to do during the rehearsing had been able to change that.

He started up the music. The fault was still there. Something was lacking somewhere. The curtain rose. The show started. He waved his stick and listened to the singers and the lethargic atmosphere seemed, if anything, to have increased. The next night was opening night and as he watched and listened he thought desperately for some solution. Then he remembered an evening long ago when an inexperienced singer named Vivienne Segal was galvanized into action by the caustic Benrimo. Suddenly in the middle of the finale to the first act he stopped the orchestra, and then, in a voice filled with cold fury, he shouted: "Just what the devil do you think this is? You, ladies and gentlemen on the stage, what do you think I am doing here in the pit? Exercising for my health, moving my arms up and down to reduce? You, in the second row there, I mean you, the boy with the blond hair, you're supposed to be acting and singing and not flirting with that little red-headed girl next to you! Most of you don't pay any attention to me or my stick! You never look at me at all! If I give you the signal to sing softer you get louder and when I want you

to get louder you start to whisper! When you sing it sounds like a bunch of wild Indians shouting and if you think that you're giving a professional performance up there I'll eat my hat!"

The performers on the stage looked at each other in consternation. The musicians in the pit stared at Romberg, mouths agape.

"Now if we're going to put on a show tomorrow night before paying customers, it's going to be a show," Romberg said. "I'm not going to have 'The Desert Song' ruined by your incompetence! Now we'll start this whole finale all over again."

He tapped the baton and the astounded musicians began again to play. The singers began to sing and as he waved his stick he was gratified to see that at last they were giving some emotion to their music.

When the first act was over, Romberg started for backstage. The musicians looked at him as though he were demented. The concert master dripped perspiration. When he got backstage he was shunned by everyone. At least, he thought grimly to himself, he had broken through the torpor that had threatened to ruin the show.

He was drinking a glass of water when suddenly there was a clearance around him and Lord Lurgen appeared. Around the perimeter the cast, the stagehands, the managers and assistant managers gathered to listen to the rebuke they expected to hear.

The chairman of the board of directors evidently appreciated the drama of the situation because he paused for a moment, and then held out his hand to the composer. In a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, he said clearly: "Romberg, I have attended many dress rehearsals at the Drury Lane Theatre, but never, never have I enjoyed anything so much as when you stopped the rehearsal and gave the cast the scolding it so richly deserved. I am proud of you and I can understand why your American productions enjoy such a success."

Instantly, as though released from cages, the listeners on the

stage clustered around the composer and added their echoes of the statement of the imperious lord. The rest of the rehearsal went off with a zest and sparkle and Romberg, in a kind and friendly tone of voice, congratulated the cast and ordered everyone to get a good rest for the opening the next night.

In the hotel room that night Romberg ordered a bottle of champagne and then started to chuckle. Lillian, still not quite recovered from the scene, shook her head, saying: "My heart stopped when you pulled off that little trick. I could feel everyone in the audience grow as tense as though they thought a bomb were going to explode. Wherever did you get the notion to do that?"

He grinned happily. "I'll tell you all about that someday, Bunny. There was nothing the matter with that cast. They sang and acted superbly—only they suffered from the same fault that made the Coldstream Guard band so difficult. They just do things more slowly here and the music wasn't written for that."

"What would you have done if Lord Lurgen took offense?"

He shrugged. "I've been watching him. He has a very definite sense of the fitness of things. I gambled that he would want me to do anything in the world to make this production a success. I won. Which was better than I did at the Grand National!"

XVIII

THERE was something about Flo Ziegfeld. Romberg always liked to watch him. Whatever it was, it belonged to Flo and nobody else had it. He was a producer out of a fantasy, a press agent's dream, a living legend. He was a magician of the theatre who waved a wand. Nothing was impossible with him. Money was paper printed by strangers made only to be spent to achieve that unique quality that made his shows Ziegfeld shows. His girls were no more beautiful than the others, but the designation 'Ziegfeld Girl' was a title. Girls were to use it proudly years later when, in using it, they plainly admitted their age.

Romberg made himself comfortable in the producer's office and accepted a scotch and soda. Ziegfeld made his business conferences over into parties. For the first half-hour he recalled old times and old experiences. "Do you remember," he asked, chuckling, "when I invited you up to our house at Dobbs Ferry to play the music you had written for 'Louis the 14th' and you brought a busload of musicians up with you?"

"I have to admit Billie took it in her stride," Romberg said.

"Ah, that was a good party," Ziegfeld recalled.

"By the way, how is your new show coming along?" Romberg asked.

Ziegfeld waved his hand as though to dismiss present business as unimportant. "Tell me first, how is Dorothy Donnelly?"

Romberg's face fell. "Still sick," he said in a low voice. "And they won't even let me up to her house to see her."

"Talented woman. Very talented woman. It was too bad about the show."

Upon his return from London, after the successful launching of 'The Desert Song,' Romberg had found Dorothy excited about a new script which had been written by Edward Sheldon. They had set to work immediately on making it into a musical, to be called 'My Princess,' and in the middle of the job Dorothy had collapsed. The book was taken over by another writer who did the best she could, but the show never quite jelled, and despite the presence of Hope Hampton in the starring role, it closed three weeks after opening in New York. The failure, which involved two of his dearest friends, Dorothy and the bedridden Sheldon, had affected Romberg greatly, especially since he had not been permitted to see Dorothy and tell her of the failure himself. "There was something cowardly about that show folding behind their backs," he said to Lillian. "With neither Dorothy nor Sheldon able to help themselves."

"Your other new show, 'The Love Call,' seems to be doing well," Ziegfeld said.

"Yes."

"Good," Ziegfeld said. "Now I've got a new show lined up myself, 'Rosalie.' I've got William Anthony McGuire to do the book, and you know how talented he is. I've got a wonderful cast —your old friend Marilyn Miller, Frank Morgan, and Jack Donahue."

"But you don't have a man to make the music," Romberg said.

"Did someone tell you?" Ziegfeld asked innocently. "I hired an English composer to do the score and now I find out he can't come over. I've got to start rehearsing in three weeks so I can

open Christmas Eve or I'm in trouble. I've got my three principals on contract and play or no play I've got a guaranteed salary I have to pay them. Romy, I need help."

Romberg shook his head. "I'd love to help you, Flo, but it's impossible. You know that Hammerstein, Mandel, and I are getting ready to rehearse our new show, 'The New Moon.' I just haven't got time."

"I won't take no for an answer, Romy," Ziegfeld said. "I'm in trouble and you've got to help me." He stood up. "Now just don't move until you figure a way to work this out. I'm not going to let you out of this office until we have this settled."

The composer scratched his chin. "What a man," he said. "Well, let me think. Perhaps you could get someone to work with me. If there were two of us it wouldn't be so hard. Have you thought about Gershwin? He's an old friend of mine and I think we could collaborate together successfully."

Before he finished the sentence Ziegfeld was on the telephone. A short while later Gershwin was in his office. Romberg winked solemnly to him as Ziegfeld began to talk.

"I'd be glad to help you," Gershwin said, "but I'm tied up right now too. I'm just getting ready to start rehearsals on 'Funny Face.' We've got the Astaires in that and it's got to be good."

Ziegfeld looked at the two composers and smiled sweetly. "Gentlemen," he said, "it is hopeless to argue with me. Both of you had better agree now. It will save a world of argument."

A half-hour later Romberg and George Gershwin agreed to take enough time out of their own shows to collaborate on a score for 'Rosalie.'

"And remember, gentlemen," Ziegfeld concluded blandly as they were leaving the office, "I have to have the music in three weeks. Not a day later."

"How do you do it, Flo?" Gershwin murmured.

In the time allotted them, the two composers got the score on

paper. They gave Ziegfeld an impromptu reading, with two pianos and some musicians, and the producer expressed himself as satisfied. "Good," he said. "Excellent. Now, I want one or the other of you on hand during rehearsals."

"That wasn't part of the bargain," Romberg protested.

"Romy, you couldn't just let that beautiful music you and George wrote be handled by strangers. Remember, one or the other. I don't ask for both, but one or the other."

There started a dither of maneuvering. Romberg rehearsed 'The New Moon' and, when he could get away, 'Rosalie.' Gershwin rehearsed 'Funny Face' and, when *he* could get time, 'Rosalie.' To make matters even more complicated, Hammerstein, who had written part of the book and all of the lyrics for 'The New Moon,' was likewise unable to give his full attention to that production because he was also rehearsing 'Show Boat' which he had written with Jerome Kern.

Despite this schedule, all four shows managed to open on the road on schedule on Christmas Eve in 1927. Ziegfeld had persuaded Romberg and Gershwin not to leave 'Rosalie' alone on the road either. Romberg shuttled from Philadelphia, where 'The New Moon' had opened, to Boston, where 'Rosalie' was playing. When he was not in Boston, Gershwin left his show in Pittsburgh and went to Boston. Since Romberg was more or less his own boss as one of the partners in 'The New Moon,' he found himself spending more and more time with the Ziegfeld show. Hammerstein, who also had only himself to answer to so far as 'The New Moon' was concerned, concentrated most of his time on 'Show Boat.' That left Mandel largely alone with 'The New Moon.' The synchronization between book and lyrics in 'The New Moon' was imperfect, but every time a suggestion for change was made to Romberg or Hammerstein the answer was that the changes could be made after the opening. Romberg was not even in Philadelphia

when 'The New Moon' opened, that being one of the nights he was required to be in Boston.

'The New Moon' suffered most from the confusion. 'Rosalie,' 'Funny Face,' and 'Show Boat' were great successes, but 'The New Moon' was out of hand. The authors assembled in the Chestnut Street Opera House in Philadelphia after the production had struggled for more than a week to shake itself down, and after a performance that was manifestly faulty in a hundred different ways they were forced to agree that the only recourse left was to call off the Broadway opening and close 'The New Moon' for repairs.

Romberg walked back alone to his hotel on the cold January night tired and dispirited. He blamed himself. If he had not allowed himself to get tied up with 'Rosalie' . . . if Oscar had not had to spend so much time on 'Show Boat' . . . there were many ifs. The fact remained that 'The New Moon' was the first complete failure in his career. He had never before been connected with a show which had to close on the road, which never even reached Broadway.

He needed Lillian badly. She had the right words. She always had the right words, and if there were words he needed to hear them now. When he reached the hotel he found a message to call her in New York. He placed the call and then opened a window and let the icy air bathe his face. The telephone rang. He picked up the receiver. "Bunny," she said. "I have some bad news for you. Dorothy is dead."

2.

After the funeral Lillian held him tightly by the arm. "Come on home," she whispered. "Let's just go home and be alone. I don't want to look at anyone, not now, not now."

"I can't," he said.

"Why not? Where do you have to go?"

"I've got to go to the theatre. 'Rosalie' is opening this week, you know."

"Darling, you don't have to go there now."

"The show has to open," he said. "We can't call off the opening because someone has died. There's work there I have to do."

"What a business!" she said, suddenly hateful.

"Didn't someone remark sometime or other, 'The show must go on'?" he asked, smiling thinly. He kissed her. "I'll be home soon, Bunny," he said.

He arrived at the theatre to find Ziegfeld in a tempestuous battle with Joseph Urban, his special designer and stage-lighting expert. Urban was a man who was even Ziegfeld's match in temperament and independence. He would take suggestions for changes in costume and scenery, but he trusted no one's judgment in matters of lighting but his own. Not even Ziegfeld had any influence with him in that field, and the producer, who respected Urban's genius, always gave in.

Urban was seated in the fourth row of the theatre with a portable telephone connecting him with the master electrician, giving instructions for lighting the show as the rehearsal progressed. Ziegfeld was pleading with him; he might as well have been talking to a wall. Urban calmly ignored him and gave his instructions as he saw fit.

When Ziegfeld saw Romberg he ran over to him. The producer was wildeyed. "Romy," he said excitedly, "I'm going crazy. The comedy scenes require as much white light as possible on the faces of the comedians. Every expression on those faces must register to the last row in the balcony or their comedy will be lost. The genius insists on subdued romantic lighting throughout and there's nothing I can do with him!"

"What can I do?"

"Listen. I've got an idea. I've got a bottle of scotch. The finest.

I want you to sit next to him and be his bartender. I'll take care of the rest. Just don't let him get suspicious."

Romberg took the whisky and sat down next to Urban, who nodded to him briefly and then continued his instructions. Presently Romberg unveiled the bottle and offered him a drink. It was during Prohibition and the scotch was unquestionably excellent. Urban took a swig and then returned to the telephone. Romberg offered him another drink. A third. A fourth. Backstage Ziegfeld gave stealthy directions to the electrician, and as Urban grew sleepier and sleepier, 'Rosalie' grew whiter and whiter.

Romberg and his wife left the theatre after the 'Rosalie' opening, excused themselves from the usual party of celebration, and returned to their apartment. He wandered through the rooms, looked into the room which Lillian had fixed over for his mother, which once again was a den, fingered through old scripts, played idly on the piano.

He turned to her suddenly, and with an onrush of words said: "Do I have to rush the way I am doing? Do I have to work myself to death? After all, 'The Student Prince' and 'Blossom Time' are still playing on the road. 'Desert Song' has two companies on the road. There is another company in California. It's a hit in London. There is a company in Australia. There is a French translation being made. 'Rosalie' will be a success. 'Love Call' is a success. Why am I trying to kill myself this way? Let's get on a boat and just sit on deck chairs and look at water. Let's get away from Broadway for a while."

Her eyes were innocent. "Then I won't have to cancel our reservations?"

"What reservations?"

"Oh, I was walking along the street and I happened to pass a travel agency and the travel pictures looked so pretty in the window and you know how a woman can't resist buying things."

"Where are we going? Or is it going to be a surprise?"

"A West Indies cruise."

"And when do we start?"

"In about ten days," she said demurely. "I arranged it so I would have time to get a new wardrobe together." She put her fingers over his mouth. "After all," she said, " 'The Student Prince' and 'Blossom Time' are still playing on the road . . ." 'Desert Song' has two companies on the road. Another is playing . . . where did you say?"

"Never mind," he said. "It has penetrated."

3.

"You are so beautiful, Evelyn," Romberg said.

"I see," she said. "That means you haven't written my aria, yet."

"So beautiful," he repeated. "And *such* a voice."

"When," she asked. "do I get my song?"

"Music is an art, Evelyn," Romberg explained. "I can't just pull arias out of my hat. One of these days, though, you'll see . . ."

"Romy," she said dangerously. "I want that aria."

"And you shall get it," he agreed. "I can't resist a beautiful woman in anything."

The rehearsals for the revised version of 'The New Moon' continued. The show had been rewritten from scratch. Upon returning from the cruise Romberg and his two partners, Mandel and Hammerstein, had agreed that an utterly new approach was necessary.

Before starting to work on the new score, Romberg had gone down to Washington in his capacity as board member of the Dramatists' Guild, and with Gene Buck, president of ASCAP, had sought to obtain changes in the legislation affecting copyright

laws. The men argued that the laws, originally passed in 1909, had to be brought up to date because of the development of motion pictures and radio, media which were not in existence when the laws were first passed.

Their efforts were unsuccessful, but the clash with the political solons was just what Romberg had needed to blow the tropical languors out of his head. Back in New York he started immediately on some new tunes for the revived operetta, and in rapid order composed 'Softly as in a Morning Sunrise,' 'The Girl on the Prow,' 'Stouthearted Men,' and 'Wanting You.'

For the new leading woman in the show the producers signed up Evelyn Herbert, fresh from the Chicago Opera Company, and the condition she imposed upon signing her contract was that Romberg would provide her with an operatic-type aria to show off her voice. Rehearsals started in June and from the beginning Miss Herbert asked about the aria. From week to week, Romberg stalled. One afternoon the singer said angrily, "Romy, there are exactly two weeks left before we are scheduled to open. I still haven't got that song. I don't want to make any scenes and I'm not trying to act like a prima donna, but I want that music and I want it in time to learn it for the opening. Now do I get it or don't I?"

"Yes," he said.

"When?"

"I've got the bass notes all composed, now all I've got to do is find the melody."

"Romy, never mind the gags, this is the last time I'm going to tell you . . ."

He went home for dinner that night and told Lillian he would have to do something to quiet his soprano. "I can't stall her any longer. She wants an aria and when a soprano wants an aria—well, the world comes to an end if she doesn't get it."

"Why haven't you written it up to now, Bunny?" his wife asked.

"Well, I promised her an operatic aria but now I'm convinced that that type of song doesn't belong in the show. It will throw it off balance. What she should have is a love ballad."

"Well?"

"But she won't accept that. She insists I write something fancier than that. The girl can sing and she wants to sing."

"Well, dinner won't be ready for half an hour," Lillian said, patting him on the wrist. "You sit right down and write something for her."

"You think you're kidding the old man, don't you?" he chuckled. He kissed her. "All right, Bunny, I will."

"Good. You've got just about thirty minutes. There's the piano."

"I know where the damned piano is!"

He sat down to the instrument and began to run his fingers over the keys. There was a melody somewhere; he had been hearing it in his mind for days; it was elusive and kept evading his seeking fingers. Now it was within his grasp and then it escaped him again. But not entirely. He had it now. He found it, and once in his hands it was captured. When Lillian returned to announce that dinner was ready, he said, "Listen, Bunny, listen to this." He leaned back and played it softly.

"I like that," she said.

"That's all I needed to hear. I'll give it to Oscar at rehearsal tonight and he'll put some words to it. Now, what do we have for dinner?"

He folded up the music paper and shoved it into his pocket and returned to the rehearsals that evening. There were other problems which came up, however, and he forgot all about it. It was three days later before Evelyn Herbert again demanded her aria, and Romberg, with a start, said, "My God, I wrote it and forgot all about it."

"It must be quite a number," the soprano said cuttingly.

"You'll see," he promised. "As soon as Hammerstein puts some words to it."

"At least," she said, "you've written *something!*"

When the rehearsal ended he called Hammerstein to one side and said, "I have Herbert's song here. I'll play it for you and see what you think." Alone with his friend in the now-darkened theatre, he played the melody, and when he finished, Hammerstein said, "I like it. Give it to me and I'll see what I can figure out in the way of a lyric."

"When you do, it will be the perfect lyric," Romberg said with great affection.

Again the song was forgotten until the middle of the fourth week of rehearsal, when Miss Herbert stated flatly that if she did not get her song she was prepared to quit. Hammerstein calmed her with the statement that he had just about finished the lyrics, and later he said to Romberg, "There's a piano in the manager's office upstairs. Come on up and see how you like the words for your new tune."

"What did you call it?" Romberg asked.

" 'Lover Come Back to Me.' "

The following afternoon, when the soprano arrived at the theatre, Romberg greeted her warmly and said, "Well, Evelyn, we have your song ready." He played it for her on the piano; before he finished the woman was almost hysterical. "You promised me an operatic aria!" she cried. "This is a ballad and I'm not a ballad singer. I can't sing this! Romy, this isn't fair to me!"

Romberg winked to Hammerstein. Then he said harshly, "Stop your beefing and learn the number. We'll talk about it afterward."

"You can't force me to sing this," she sobbed. She ran from the stage.

"You're forgetting the music," Romberg said imperturbably.

From then on nothing more was said about the new song. Neither the soprano nor the composer mentioned it. The air was cool between them as she went about her work. Romberg did not tell her that he and Hammerstein had planned to have the male lead, Robert Halliday, sing the chorus of the song in a reprise, two scenes after the soprano would have introduced it. He rehearsed the tenor and the chorus secretly in the new number.

At the end of the week a boy stood at the entrance to the theatre, and when he saw the soprano coming down the street he gave the signal. As Miss Herbert entered the house she was greeted with a rendition of the song by Halliday and the men. She paused for a moment at the head of the aisle, and then, red with fury, she ran down toward the stage, screaming, "How dare you give this number to anyone else? You gave that number to me! It's mine and no one else is going to sing it!"

Romberg put his arm around the shaking woman. "Evelyn, darling," he said gently. "They are only singing the reprise. *You* will introduce the number two scenes earlier." He looked at her closely. "That is," he said, "if you've changed your mind and will learn it."

"I know it by heart," she said.

"Ah. Good."

'The New Moon' started its second career with a tryout in Cleveland. It satisfied everyone that it was a better show than was the hapless production that had closed in Philadelphia. But there was something wrong with Evelyn Herbert's new number.

It was strange, but when Halliday and his chorus sang 'Lover Come Back to Me,' it brought down the house, but when the soprano introduced it two scenes before that reprise, it received a cool reception. Miss Herbert's doubts and fears were revived and she again swore that the song was not for her. In desperation, Romberg, seeking to find a clue to the puzzle, changed the ending

for her, giving her three high notes to sing. It now was an aria operatic enough to suit her, and when she sang the altered version the following evening she stopped the show.

There was still a weak spot. The soprano had a waltz to sing with a female chorus in the last scene of the first act, and it was not successful. On the third night of the Cleveland tryout, the authors and their wives ate a midnight supper in a Childs and at two-thirty in the morning walked back to the hotel.

Romberg lagged a few steps behind the others, softly humming to himself, and when the group reached the hotel his eyes were sparkling. The lobby was in semi-darkness. The night clerk drowsed at his desk. A night watchman was making his rounds. Romberg pulled an envelope out of his pocket and leaned over the closed cigar counter and scribbled some notes. His friends watched him. Five minutes later he said to Hammerstein, "Come on up to my room, Oscar. I think I have a new waltz ready."

There in the room in the small morning hours he played the tune and Hammerstein immediately started putting together the words. They decided to call the waltz 'One Kiss.'

'The New Moon' opened in New York on September 19, 1928. The operetta which had originally failed miserably on the road started a run which lasted for almost two years on Broadway, to become one of the most phenomenally successful operettas of all time. English rights were sold soon after the opening and it was scheduled to open in the Drury Lane following the run there of 'The Desert Song.'

As they left the Imperial Theatre on opening night, Romberg squeezed his wife's arm and said happily, "I'm sure glad we decided to give that another chance."

"The Caribbean atmosphere," she said. "That came from our cruise."

"Did it?" he asked innocently.

"You see, when you listen to me . . ."

"Naturally, Lillian," he said. "Naturally."

4.

They sat down in the deep plush seats in the private projection room and Romberg lit a cigarette nervously. Lillian touched his fingers reassuringly. "There is nothing for *you* to worry about," she whispered.

He wet his lips and nodded, and presently the lights were extinguished and there was presented for the first time on a screen a musical picture. When he saw the title, 'The Desert Song,' he puffed quickly on the cigarette and when the opening sequences appeared he gripped her hand tightly.

He remembered back to when 'The Student Prince' had been made into a silent picture and how different it had been for him then, to see the familiar scenes, to live again with the familiar characters, but to hear nothing of the music he had put so much of himself into. How different it was now, with every song there, clear, lovely.

When the picture ended he blinked his eyes at the lights. "What they have done," he said to Lillian. "The screen is like magic. How can they ever hope to find such reality on a stage?"

He thanked the motion-picture executives for their courtesy in giving his wife and him this private showing, and then returned home to their new penthouse apartment, the result of the success of 'The New Moon.' In the corner of the living room was a dream realized, a pipe organ. He sat down before it and rubbed his chin in characteristic gesture. "It's a new world, Bunny," he said. "Look what they've done with this first production! And they haven't started to explore the possibilities. Do you realize what motion pictures can do now? Millions of persons who have never been able to afford a ticket to a legitimate production can

go to movies. And what they can see! My God, everyone can have a front seat! With closeups, nothing, not a single inflection need be lost." He paused. "Bunny," he said. "That's the next thing!"

She said nothing.

" 'Desert Song' will be a success as a movie," he went on. "No question about it. And from then on Hollywood will turn more and more to Broadway for its musicals. Composers, lyric writers . . . can you imagine how much they will be in demand?"

"And we just moved here," she sighed, looking around the spacious room. "When do we move to California?"

'The Desert Song' proved as much of a success as a motion picture as it had as a legitimate production. Hollywood studios began to look to Broadway, to buy anything and everything that was available. Warner Brothers, the motion-picture company which had been given a new lease on life by the advent of sound, made motion-picture history when it signed Romberg and Hammerstein to a contract calling for four original musicals for the screen, the first major contract by a studio for musicals.

Upon signing the contracts, Romberg and Hammerstein and their wives prepared to go to London to start rehearsing the English company of 'The New Moon,' and to see the French presentation of 'The Desert Song' in the Mocambo Theatre. Before leaving, the partners released some of the 'New Moon' music for radio broadcast.

They had restricted the broadcasting for months after the operetta was a Broadway success, and then, before going to London, lifted the ban. The sheet-music sale leaped in response, and 'Lover Come Back to Me' soon reached a sale of well over one million copies.

XIX

Now he was back in Vienna. From somewhere came the sound of a gypsy band. A fiacre drawn by a smart-looking horse clattered by. A company of soldiers lounged against a wall. A flower girl waved to him. He walked along the Viennese street, his mind a mosaic of memories, his heart filled with an old emotion. He was back in Vienna and it was not now the city of death but the Vienna of the last century.

The first picture for Warner Brothers was to be called 'Viennese Nights.' The story spanned three generations, starting in the old Imperial capital before the turn of the century, leaping to New York in the first decade of the new century, returning to the Vienna of the present time. And as he had watched, a portion of the old city had been built and for the first time he had witnessed the magic of the screen.

Here were no stage sets, no painted scenery, no clever effects achieved by lights and shadows. Here were buildings, stores, restaurants, hundreds of costumed men and women. And for this creation he was the magician with the wand.

The studio had besought him to suggest anything he could think of to make the set as authentic as possible. Where else, he

thought, where else on the face of the earth, could a man re-create the scenes of his childhood? He felt like a god, able to transport himself back into vanished time. He made his suggestions as though in a dream, as a child might imagine a fairyland, as a man might close his eyes and remember. And every time he recalled some detail the words were hardly past his lips before his suggestion came to being.

Before his eyes returned the military bands, the gypsy orchestras, the *Schrammel*, the Prater, the Rathskeller, the Hofburg, the Graben, the little coffee houses, the street-corner kiosks. Recreated were the military uniforms in almost pitiless details: he thought, with wry amusement, that he could no longer slip into those skin-tight trousers and he remembered the day when his company paraded before the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. His mind flew back in aching turmoil as the years were stripped away. Only he himself failed to return to that departed youth. Somehow, amid all this magic, he himself did not become a youth of twenty; there was a price he had to pay for this infinite power that had been given to him: he had to survey his youth as a middleaged composer, successful, happy, respected, but not twenty years old in Vienna.

Hammerstein watched his friend's excitement with a tender amusement in his eyes. "Romy," he said gently, "we've worked together before—'Desert Song,' 'New Moon'—and I thought I knew you pretty well. But I've never quite seen you this way before. I think I know what it must mean to you to be able to re-create all these scenes of your youth."

Romberg nodded slowly. "The scenes of my youth. Can you imagine what it does to me to see all these places again? Just as they used to be. Nothing changed. Oscar, Oscar, what memories! Any man can dream and remember, but how many men are able to see their dreams built into reality before their eyes. I expect my old friends to walk up this street at any minute."

Hammerstein touched his arm. "Romy."

Romberg looked up at him. "And the best part of the whole thing is that we are doing this together. You know, Oscar, when Dorothy Donnelly died I felt that the bottom dropped out of the world. Not only because of how dear she was to me as a person, but because we worked so well together. I didn't think that I would ever find anyone I could work with so well. And then the gods smiled at me again. If I don't ever tell it to you again, Oscar, thanks. Thanks a lot."

Hammerstein waved his hand. "It's in the music, Romy."

"You put the music into a language for people to sing," Romberg said soberly. "When I see the words you conceive I know that those are the right words, the only words. Once you have put them down there can't be any other words." He grinned. "You're the best, Oscar." He gripped his friend warmly and then he turned his eyes again to the set.

As he watched a guard relief, wearing uniforms he remembered so well and led by a band, marched through the Graben to the Hofburg. Where was Major Jellicheck, he wondered? And Corporal Janos Szabados? If he looked hard enough surely Ernoe would come strolling along.

When the technicians were constructing the Graben he had been asked how long the lovely street with its exquisite little shops should be. "I think I can answer that easily enough," he said. He stuck his walking stick into the ground and then started to march in a military manner, whistling a tune. At a certain point he stopped again. "This should be the end of the Graben," he said. Then he said: "You see, one day I composed a little tune for our guard relief and the tune was written to last just long enough for the men to walk down the length of the Graben." And the shopping center was made just that long.

On the day that shooting was to start Romberg made a last check of the set. He said that he thought the colors of the build-

ings were not exactly as he remembered them. In a few minutes an army of men with spray guns appeared and in less than half an hour the colors of the buildings were changed.

It was difficult when the day's shooting was finished to have to return again to Hollywood.

2.

The set buzzed excitedly. There were distinguished visitors. Calvin Coolidge, the former President, and Mrs. Coolidge were on hand to see how movies were made. The studio was in something of a dither. Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge had, unfortunately, picked a day to visit when there was not very much activity. Nothing large-scale was scheduled to be shot that day.

Hastily the cast for 'Viennese Nights' was assembled on the set for the Prater. Orders were given to reenact a scene which already had been shot and processed. When Mr. and Mrs. Coolidge arrived on the set they found everyone seemingly at work. Bands played, cameras ground, the director, Alan Crosland, gave properly impressive orders. On the set the actors sat at tables in a little beer garden. Waiters appeared and served them seidels of beer. Although Prohibition was still the law of the land, some of the actors had got together and had bought a case of real beer from Canada. The waiters served the real brew to these actors and ordinary near-beer to others.

Mr. Coolidge watched the scene for a few moments. His face was grave, his speech as taciturn as usual. Presently he asked Crosland, "What is it they are drinking?"

"Beer," the director said.

"Near-beer?"

"Of course, Mr. Coolidge, near-beer."

A few moments later the former President said, "I'd like some."

Crosland told a property boy to bring Mr. Coolidge a glass of beer. The boy returned with a beaker of the foaming brew. Mr. Coolidge drank heartily. Then he said, "Best near-beer I ever tasted."

Crosland, his eyebrows raised, investigated. "Romy," he whispered. "They made a mistake. They gave him the real stuff."

Perhaps the beer helped. The former President enjoyed himself as the pretended shooting continued. Every once in a while his reserved face opened into a smile. When the scene was ended, Crosland asked, "Would you like to see the rushes of the scenes you just witnessed, Mr. Coolidge?"

He was taken to a projection room and shown the scenes which actually had been shot some days before. As he left, he said soberly: "Thank you, gentlemen. I never had any idea things were done so quickly and efficiently out here. I would not have believed it if I had not seen it with my own eyes."

3.

Because of the color-processing, it was six months before 'Viennese Nights' was ready to be shown to the public. In the intervening time Romberg and Hammerstein completed a second picture for Warner Brothers, a black-and-white film called 'Children of Dreams.' While working on that picture the authors were informed that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had bought the motion-picture rights to 'The New Moon,' paying an up-to-then record price for the operetta.

Upon completing the second picture for Warner Brothers, Romberg and Lillian returned to New York for the opening on September 20 of his new show with a Peruvian background, called 'Nina Rosa,' which he had written with Irving Caesar and Otto Harbach in the spring of the year and which had been playing on the road since then. The operetta was to run for eight

months in New York, an English version was produced in the Hippodrome in London, and French rights were sold to the Parisian impresario Maurice Lehmann. Opening in the Théâtre du Chatelet it was destined to run for two and a half years, to establish a record for a musical in the French capital.

The color prints of 'Viennese Nights' arrived in New York in October and it was booked for a two-a-day run in the new Warner Theatre. Romberg was understandably anxious that this first screen original he had done be as successful as possible. For it he had written a short symphonic poem which had been recorded by the Los Angeles Symphony orchestra of one hundred musicians —the first time this organization had been used for such a purpose—and a number of songs, two of which he thought had captured the spirit of the picture and the time in which it was set. These songs were 'You Will Remember Vienna' and 'I Bring a Love Song.'

At that time the sound was not recorded on the film itself, as it was later, but was recorded on records. It was necessary, obviciously, for the records to be synchronized perfectly with the film if the illusion of the spoken screen was to be created. Control men in the theatre also had to make the necessary crescendos and decrescendos by hand during the running of the film.

Romberg undertook to rehearse the afternoon and night crews of projection-room men and sound engineers. To ensure perfect cooperation, he bought each man a box of cigars.

On the afternoon before the first public showing of the film, a number of studio executives, including the three Warner brothers, were given a preview. Romberg assured the executives that he had the technicians trained perfectly.

In the middle of the first reel, however, something went wrong. On the screen a military band came closer and closer, but the sound of their music grew fainter and fainter. The picture was

stopped and Romberg called up, "What's the matter, boys? What happened to the sound control?"

A loud voice with an Irish brogue yelled back, "We're the third crew. You not only didn't rehearse us but where are our boxes of cigars?"

"Coming up," Romberg called back. "Coming up."

"Okay," the voice replied. "And so will the band."

4.

Returning to their home from dinner one evening, she asked, "What is it, Bunny?"

"What's what?"

"Darling, you know that I can read you. What's on your mind? What makes you so abstracted? You hardly paid any attention to your dinner tonight, which was an important sign since the food was so good and you didn't even nod to the orchestra leader when he played some of your music. What is it that's bothering you so much?"

"There is nothing private in my life any more," he complained.

"Of course not, now what is it?"

"Well, it's something important. Let's wait until we get home. It's a long story." When they were in the apartment, he said: "Years ago, Bunny, when I was trying to get started in this crazy business I signed a publishing contract with a man. It was a bum contract. I've never forgotten it. There are other young writers coming along every day. Some of them are still getting the same bum contracts. This may help them a little."

"So far, it's over my head. Perhaps you'd better start from the beginning. I know I'm going to hear a great deal about this, whatever it is, from now on, so I better be briefed from the start."

"Well, it's about something called the Song Writers' Protective Association," he said.

"I thought it might be an association."

"Make yourself comfortable, Bunny," he said, "and teacher will give you a lesson."

In the theatrical world, he began, virtually everybody was organized in unions and guilds. The stagehands had their union. The actors had Actors' Equity. The dramatists and the musical-production composers had the Dramatists' Guild. The song writers alone, the men and women who wrote the popular tunes, not for shows, were unorganized.

Song writers and their publishers belonged to ASCAP, of course, but ASCAP was primarily a collecting agency which levied fees on the users of popular copywritten music in public places. ASCAP was a neutral agency and could not take sides in quarrels between the song writers and the publishers, and what the former needed was an organization of their own.

In December of 1930 Billy Rose called a group of popular composers together and some forty of them set up the Song Writers' Protective Association for the purpose of being able to present a solid front in dealing with publishers.

"And that's it," he said. "We are setting up a basic minimum contract and eventually we hope to be able to get all the publishers to accept it. If the song writers stick together, the publishers will have to accept it. The contract doesn't mean much to most of us who set this thing up today. We're strong enough individually to make our own contracts good. But the newcomers aren't. If we can put this thing through there won't be any more contracts like the first one I had to sign."

"So," she said. "You have a third little hobby." She began to count off on her fingers. "You spend weeks in Washington trying to change the copyright laws. You spend days trying to change

and improve the Dramatists' Guild contract. And now this. Are you going to quit writing music?"

"Now, Bunny," he chuckled. "You know better than that. I'll just have to stretch the day out a little bit. Edison used to say that all we needed was four hours' sleep. I think it was Edison and I think it was four hours. Anyway, they say that the older you get the less sleep you need. Isn't it convenient that I'm growing old?"

"Who is running this new song writers' group?" she asked. Then she said, "Never mind. I know. You're the president."

"They asked me," he said. "I had to say yes."

5.

"Romy," Frank Mandel said. "How about writing a song for our cocktail party?"

"What kind of a song? Why don't you use the 'Drinking Song' from 'The Student Prince'?"

"We want a new song. A new song for our new theatre."

In the spring of 1931, the producing firm of Schwab and Mandel had two irons in the fire. Mandel, Romberg, and Oscar Hammerstein were writing 'East Wind,' and the firm was also producing another musical show called 'Free For All.' In order to have a theatre for their shows they leased the old Hammerstein Theatre, renamed it the Manhattan Theatre, and then planned a cocktail party for their friends and the press.

Romberg, asked to supply music for the occasion, happily remembered the old 'Brooklyn Navy Yard March' he had written at the beginning of the war. He dug the music out of the trunk, renamed it the 'Manhattan Theatre March,' and played it at the party. Then, judiciously, he returned the music to the trunk for possible future need.

'Free For All' opened on Broadway three weeks before 'East

Wind.' There was a large brokers' buy for 'Free For All' but the show was unsuccessful and the brokers were caught. The producers closed the show.

'East Wind,' meanwhile, seemed to be destined for a better career. It played in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Baltimore, and broke box-office records in the latter city. The producers were jubilant at having a hit which would permit them to recoup their losses on 'Free For All.' The ticket brokers, who had taken such a beating on 'Free For All,' caught the new operetta in Baltimore and agreed it had all the earmarks of a hit. They pleaded, however, that they had taken such a loss on 'Free For All' that they could not afford to risk another loss, particularly in those bad times. Schwab, himself trying to make up the losses on the earlier show, insisted that the brokers buy the same huge blocks of seats for 'East Wind' as they did for 'Free For All.'

The argument lasted for several days and it ended with the brokers returning to New York without any buy at all. The men concerned with the production of 'East Wind,' Romberg included, were so certain they had a hit that they were not at all worried. The brokers, they assured themselves, would come around apologizing after the opening.

'East Wind' opened in October and was a complete flop.

There was nothing in it that appealed to the first-night audience. Comedy scenes that had proved amusing on the road left Broadway viewers unamused. There was no applause for anything—music, acting, dancing. The next morning the critics echoed the first-night reaction.

Now it was the producers who went to the brokers and asked for help. They offered to cut prices. They tried to book theatre parties. Nothing helped. After three weeks the play was closed. The producing firm, with two failures in a row, called it a day and suspended operations.

"I feel so damned alone, Lillian," Romberg said. "I've been abandoned. Oscar is writing a new show with Jerry Kern. The Shuberts are in the process of reorganization. Dorothy Donnelly is gone. I've got no writer to call up in the morning."

"I think this is good for you," she said quietly.

"Good for me? My last show a flop. You call that good? My God, Bunny, what would happen to me if I suddenly couldn't do it any more?"

"Yes, good for you. There are reasons for everything, Bunny. Listen to me. You won't like to hear this, but listen to me. You've had so many successes, so many, many successes. That isn't entirely right. There has to be bad with the good. You must, from time to time, feel exactly as you are feeling now. Or else nothing will be good and you *will* lose your touch. How can you continue to cherish your achievements without failures to balance them with?"

"You think I've gotten too damn cocky?" he asked angrily.

"No, Bunny, I didn't say that. I just say that it's been a long time since you've had to feel the humility that comes with failure."

"Why do I need humility?" he demanded.

"Because humility is necessary if your music is going to continue to have something in it to reach people's hearts. You do have a touch that makes people know your music, makes them sing it instantly, as though they had always known it. You've written inconsequential music, yes, but you have, in your best work, written things which will not be forgotten soon. And that kind of music requires humility, because without humility you cannot feel the things you have to feel, and you *would* lose it. I love you very much, Bunny, and still I hope that from time to time you have something like this to remind you that your music must come from your heart."

XX

LILLIAN shivered in the chill wind. "Now I know why they always talk about Paris in the spring," she said. "Bunny, I'm freezing."

"There are excellent remedies for that condition in Paris," he said. "There's the Café de la Paix. We can leave our chills behind us in there."

They crossed the Avenue de l'Opéra and entered the cafe. They found a small table near the window and looked out on the busy French scene. When the waiter had taken their order, she asked, "What was the cable about?"

"It's from Flo Ziegfeld. He wants to produce 'Melody.' "

"I thought he was through with Broadway," Lillian said. "Isn't he living in California?"

He grinned. "He's like a retired fire-horse out in pasture. When he hears the sound of the sirens he starts chafing."

"What are you going to tell him?"

"I'll have to tell him Arthur Hammerstein still has the option. If he doesn't pick it up I'll certainly let Flo have it if he wants it." He smiled reminiscently. "I've really got a soft spot in my heart for Flo. He's the bon vivant of all producers. Expenses never mean anything to him. He never cares whether he gets his money back or not, just so long as his shows are the epitome of

glamor and beauty, the last word in silks and satins and the tops in casts. I'll tell him that I'd like nothing better than for him to do 'Melody' if Hammerstein doesn't pick up the option."

The new operetta, 'Melody,' had been completed by January of 1932. Romberg had gone out and found an author for himself, Edward Childs Carpenter, whose play 'Bachelor Father,' produced some three years earlier, had been a tremendous hit. Irving Caesar, who had written 'Nina Rosa' with him, agreed to do the lyrics for 'Melody.' The play was completed without any definite producer in mind. However Arthur Hammerstein, uncle to Oscar, who had been retired for some time, was considering returning to show business and had taken a six-month option on the operetta.

Romberg and his wife went off to London and then Paris to look in on the French production of 'Nina Rosa,' which was enjoying its record-breaking run there.

"What now?" Lillian asked.

"I've got some business with Lehmann," he said. "He wants to see me about something."

"An afternoon free, for me? And in Paris? Now tell me, Bunny, what more could a woman want?"

M. Maurice Lehmann, the producer-director of the Théâtre du Chatelet, threw his arms around Romberg and hugged him. "I am always so happy to see you," he said. It was one of the few sentences he could speak in English. "The man who wrote the music for 'Nina Rosa,' " he continued in French, "is always welcome."

"Good," Romberg said. Then he said, "I mean, *bon.*"

"*Ah, bon. Mais oui. Bon.*"

Since the conversation could not have continued much further without assistance, M. Lehmann called in a translator, and then, through the translator, introduced Romberg to another Frenchman, M. André Mouezy-Eon, an author.

M. Lehmann had an idea. The success of 'Nina Rosa' had enchanted everyone. And it was translated from an American operetta. M. Lehmann's idea was that the incomparable Sigmund Romberg should write music for an original French operetta. "My friend," he said fervently, and then paused politely for the translator to translate, "My friend, the French people would take you to their hearts!"

"They would?" asked M. Romberg.

"Not something from your Broadway, although we of France have respect for your Broadway, but something original for Paris."

"But I do not speak French."

"Your music is international!"

M. Romberg bowed. M. Lehmann bowed. M. Mouezy-Eon bowed. Then M. Romberg said, "Explain, if you please, how it could be done."

"Gladly. You will write the music, beautiful music, such as only Sigmund Romberg can write."

"I understand, so far."

"And I for my part will engage the very best of French talent to write your book and lyrics. M. Mouezy-Eon, an author of France, will write the book. And I will secure the services of the great Albert Willemetz to write the lyrics."

"And then what? Am I supposed to stay in Paris or are my collaborators planning to come to New York?" asked M. Romberg.

"Neither. They will work here and you will work in New York."

"You mean we are to collaborate across the Atlantic Ocean?"

"It will take a little arranging," M. Lehmann admitted. "But it can be done. You may allow yourself a year to complete the project. Even though you will have to send your material back and forth across the ocean, it can be done in a year. And beauti-

fully! The great talents of America and France joined in artistic success."

Romberg rubbed his chin. The idea was tempting and unique—to write music to French lyrics. "There is still something to discuss, my friend," he said.

"And what is that, my old?"

"Money."

"Ah, there is no lack of that," said M. Lehmann grandly. "French capital will oversubscribe to this. For the music of Romberg, money is no object."

"The exchange is very complicated," said Romberg. "Let us discuss this in dollars. I understand dollars."

The contract, at his own absurdly high terms, was in his pocket when they left Paris. He made himself comfortable in a deck chair and said to Lillian, "It is nice when they want you so badly."

2.

Hammerstein, the elder, decided that he did not want to return to the wars after all, and allowed the option on 'Melody' to drop at the expiration of the six-month period. Romberg, fresh from another unsuccessful tilt with the congressmen in Washington, and deep in the increasing troubles of the Song Writers' Protective Association, which was being resisted by the publishers, immediately wrote to Ziegfeld that he would send the material to him in California. He never received an answer to the letter. After a brief illness, Ziegfeld died on July 22, 1932. The death came as a profound shock, particularly since Romberg had, only a few months before, attended the funeral of another old friend, John Philip Sousa.

'Melody' was picked up by George White, long a rival of Zieg-

feld, whose 'Scandals' had competed with the master-showman's 'Follies' in beauty and nudity, and who now wanted to do something with a little more dignity than a naked revue. A few weeks after White signed the contract to produce 'Melody,' the libretto for the French operetta began to arrive, scene by scene, from Paris, in its French original and with a rough translation. The title was *'Rose de France,'* and Romberg began the novel experience of writing music for a show which he understood only imperfectly.

The first thing he did was buy some French-English and English-French dictionaries and a couple of rhyming dictionaries. So that M. Willemetz would understand what he was trying to say with the music, he wrote his own English lyrics, with the help of the rhyming dictionaries, and the strange, long-distance collaboration got underway. Number after number, scene after scene, crossed and recrossed the ocean, and although they never had met Romberg and Willemetz struck up a lively friendship.

After he had started working on *'Rose de France,'* Romberg discovered that the Théâtre du Chatelet generally presented shows which lasted for at least three hours, and he was required to write almost double the amount of music he ordinarily wrote for a Broadway show. He began to see that French producer had known what he was doing when he agreed to the generous terms of the contract. Romberg finished the score by the end of November and was gratified to hear from Lehmann that the French producer was entirely satisfied. Romberg now was able to sit in on the rehearsals of 'Melody,' which was scheduled to open on Christmas Eve, 1932, in Philadelphia, for a two-week run, to be followed by a four-week engagement in the Colonial Theatre in Boston, and then on to open in the Amsterdam Theatre in New York. It was perfect booking and the play showed up brilliantly in rehearsal. White was satisfied he had a hit.

Evelyn Herbert, Romberg's old friend from 'The New Moon'

days, arrived in Philadelphia for the dress rehearsal with a raging fever. In one of those scenes so loved by writers of the theatre, her understudy, Mildred Parisette, jumped into the role. She gave a magnificent performance. The play opened with Miss Parisette in the starring role and was cheered by the critics.

On the fifth day of the Philadelphia run, the stage manager called Romberg on the telephone and announced that Miss Parisette was sick.

"How about Herbert?" Romberg asked.

"Still sick," the stage manager said laconically.

"Find out Herbert's temperature and Parisette's temperature and call me back," Romberg ordered.

Ten minutes later the manager reported in. "Herbert has 100. Parisette, 102."

Romberg called Miss Herbert. "Since your temperature is only 100 tonight," he said, "you have to go on."

The soprano, despite her fever, gave her first performance that night and sang beautifully. White and Romberg shook hands. It appeared that not even the double sickness of the leading lady and her understudy could hurt 'Melody.'

After the notices given by the Philadelphia critics, the show was a sellout, night after night. The sale was so good that White began to get ideas. The Colonial Theatre in Boston seated 1400. But the Boston Opera House could accommodate close to 3000. White canceled the Colonial booking and engaged the Opera House for the Boston run. The management of the Colonial Theatre immediately booked a popular dramatic show. The advance sale in Boston dropped off perceptibly, but White was unworried.

'Melody' opened in Boston during a heavy snowfall. The Opera House was only half-filled. It was no consolation that that same audience would have filled the Colonial Theatre. The first-

string critics attended the dramatic presentation and the second-stringers gave 'Melody' a drubbing.

Meanwhile White was making more changes in the plans. He had canceled the booking in the Amsterdam Theatre and had leased the old Earl Carroll Theatre, now called the Casino Theatre, a much larger house, and set about remodeling it for the Broadway premiere of 'Melody.' The work on the remodeling took longer than planned and it became evident that the house would not be ready for 'Melody' when the Boston run was over. White quickly booked the show for a week in Pittsburgh and then, still unable to get into New York, moved it to Newark. At the end of the Newark run the theatre was still not ready, and White found that he had to suffer for his highhandedness in changing theatres at the start. He could not get a smaller house anywhere in New York. He finally moved the show into the Majestic Theatre, in Brooklyn, and invited the critics to the opening as his guests. It was not until February 14 that 'Melody' finally reached Manhattan. The show received excellent notices and began to hang out the 'Standing Room Only' sign. The first week grossed $45,000; this jumped to $48,000 the next week. White, exhausted but happy, went off to Florida for some golf.

It was just three weeks later that the newly elected President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, declared a bank holiday.

Still the showman, White immediately telephoned instructions from Florida to hang out a sign in front of the theatre stating that checks would be honored at the box office during the holiday. 'Melody' continued to play to packed houses; on March 13, when the banks reopened, it was found that of $15,000 worth of checks almost a third were bad.

Business slumped everywhere after the banks reopened. White had a $7000 nut each week just for the rental and operation of the theatre. He asked to have the rent reduced but was refused.

He looked for a smaller theatre but he found all other doors still closed to him. 'Melody' struggled along for five or six weeks more and then was forced to close.

Romberg was heartbroken. Lillian tried to console him. "You did the best you could, Bunny, and that's all that should matter to you. It wasn't because of the music that the show closed."

"How many things, how many things have to fit together to make a success of a show," he mused. "Little things, lots and lots of little things, and they all have to fall into place or everything goes under. Look, I write the music for an operetta. Everything is right—good book, good music, good gags, wonderful success on the road, critics enthusiastic. What more could you want? Then it's a bank holiday and if the show manages to survive that it has to close anyway because the producer tried to juggle theatres around and got himself in a jam with the booking office. 'Melody' would have gone on for months in a smaller house. Everybody kills himself trying to put a show together and then some unexpected thing, some simple gimmick—and everything is lost." He laughed. "Well, the hell with it. We'll see what we do with the next one. How about opening a bottle of champagne, Bunny? There's nothing like celebrating the closing of a show with champagne!"

3.

The announcer finished his introductory speech and then pointed a finger at Romberg. On that signal Romberg brought down his baton and the orchestra began to play the Emperor Waltz. ("Always Viennese waltzes," his father had said. "Other music has been written, you know.") Where, though, was there music like this? ("We can live, we Viennese, only in art now," Lehar had said. "The world will know us only through the dreams of artists who remember. When you go back to America, do not forget Vienna.")

How could he forget Vienna? What was that line? 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my hand forget its cunning.' It was something like that. "If I forget thee, Vienna," he thought.

He worked with the orchestra, feeling a vivid potency. His men had been drilled and drilled so that they played exactly as he wanted them to play. It was not a new style, not a new conception at all, but a return: a return to Vienna. What was the phrase, 'Viennese charm'? On Broadway it was called 'schmaltz.' It didn't matter what it was called.

He was embarked on something new, and, as always, gave every ounce of his energy to the new medium, as though nothing else existed. He had now, for the first time in his life, his own radio program.

The months that had followed the closing of 'Melody' were bad ones. He needed desperately to reassure himself. At the beginning everything he touched, it seemed, went wrong. He and Otto Harbach had been signed to do a screen original for the old Fox studios. Musicals, after a long decline, were becoming popular on the screen again. A change in studio management, however, caused the plan to be shelved.

Then a deal arose in which the Shuberts were to present Maria Jeritza, the Metropolitan Opera diva, in an operetta. He wrote the music and then hurried off to Paris to rehearse the *'Rose de France'* company. Before the show opened in Paris, Mme. Jeritza, who had been in Vienna, arrived in Paris on her way to New York to start rehearsing the operetta. Romberg left the *'Rose de France'* rehearsals and returned to the United States with Mme. Jeritza, excited at the prospect of doing the show with the magnificent singer. At the last moment the opera star decided it would be undignified to appear in a Broadway show and the operetta was canceled out. Romberg was heartbroken, particularly when he heard that *'Rose de France'* had opened to an enthusiastic audience in the French capital, an opening he would have been

able to attend had he not returned for the Jeritza show. *'Rose de France'* played for two years in Paris but he never saw it.

Lillian persuaded him to take another Caribbean cruise, but, restless and unhappy as he was, the holiday was a failure. Returning to New York in the spring of 1934, he took on the radio show to start in the fall of that year, and then went out to Hollywood to join Oscar Hammerstein in writing the music for a motion picture called 'The Night Is Young.'

It was in writing the score for this motion picture that he knew he again had written a ballad that would not soon be forgotten. Hammerstein, with his infinite talent, put lovely words to the music and they called it 'When I Grow Too Old to Dream.'

"When I grow too old to dream,
I'll have you to remember.
When I grow too old to dream,
Your love will live in my heart. . . ."

While they listened to the song being recorded for the picture they looked at each other and grinned. The spark between them still existed.

"I like that," said Romberg.

"It fits," said Hammerstein.

As he had studied and mastered the technique of writing music for the theatre, as he had probed the problems involved in writing music for the screen, now he turned to his new medium, radio. It was a new world.

For the program he engaged forty musicians, four soloists, and a choir of ten voices. Sponsored by Swift and Company, the show was broadcast coast-to-coast on Saturday nights. His singers were Rise Stevens, Nadine Connor, Helen Marshall and James Melton. In addition to the music there were some original musical

sketches, and William Lyons Phelps, professor emeritus of Yale University, served as commentator.

The next weeks were weeks of intensive work. He attended to every detail himself, leaving nothing to assistants. Radio was new and he had to know it. He studied with the studio engineers and familiarized himself with their problems of sound control. He consulted with these technicians and then worked to make the music fit their peculiar requirements. He tried out different arrangements with the microphones, rearranged his soloists and choirs, shifted the seating in the orchestra.

For music he had a wealth of old friends to choose from. He had a very real hesitancy in conducting too much of his own music. He knew what the reaction would be if he played too much Romberg; besides, there was nothing new to him in Romberg music. It was the music of other composers he wanted to tackle.

He found a youth fresh from the University of Pennsylvania with a talent for arrangement. He tutored the youth, Don Walker, in what he was trying to reach with the music he played, and Walker developed rapidly. Soon he became his chief arranger, and from there, as time went on, became arranger for all of Romberg's future music, for the theatre, radio, concert stage, and screen.

There was a pianist in his orchestra who attracted his attention, not only by the excellence of his playing, but because of his amusing remarks. Romberg had found out long before that a comic was a valuable man to have in an orchestra, and that a funny remark could frequently break the tensions of long rehearsals. He encouraged the pianist in his caustic humor, and after one rehearsal which had been unusually trying he called the young man over and thanked him for his good humor. "I remember your name, of course," Romberg said. "But just for the moment . . ."

The pianist grinned. "Oscar Levant," he said. Then he added impudently, "Remember it next time!"

The packing house of Swift and Company prepared to celebrate an anniversary with a special broadcast. The president of the company was to make a speech from Chicago, and Romberg was asked if it would be possible for him to compose a little song, a march perhaps, for the event.

"Certainly," he agreed. "I'll have it ready for the broadcast." When he returned home that evening he said to Lillian, "I have to write a march for the Swift Company. They're having a celebration in three weeks."

"I'll get it for you," she said. "I know just where it is."

From the files she took out the old 'Brooklyn Navy Yard March,' renamed the 'Manhattan Theatre March,' and now given another chance at life under its third title, 'The Swift Jubilee March.' He played it with such flourish on the broadcast that he was requested to repeat it twice on later broadcasts. When the twenty-six week contract was up, Lillian carefully replaced the music.

"You never know when you may need this again," she said.

4.

There was the old tingle of first-night excitement at the St. James Theatre on December 5, 1935. Lillian crinkled her eyes and whispered, "Bunny, you're behaving as though this were your first show. Relax, Bunny, relax!"

"It's been so long it almost feels like a first show," he said. "Do you realize, Bunny, that it's almost three years? This is the first show since 'Melody' and that will be three years in February. Why wouldn't I feel as though this were a first show?"

The show was called 'May Wine' and had resulted from a chance meeting between Romberg and an old friend, Eric von Stroheim. Von Stroheim and Romberg had first met years before when Romberg played the piano in Joska Fejer's orchestra in the Cafe Boulevard, and Von Stroheim, who later was to come to typify brutality and arrogance on the screen, was headwaiter there.

Von Stroheim, after a varied career, had turned novelist, and had produced a murder mystery called 'The Happy Alienist.' Romberg read the novel and decided it would be ideal for an operetta and persuaded his old partners Hammerstein and Mandel to write it with him.

Hammerstein and Mandel had argued strongly against doing the show. The story involved psychoanalysis, a subject which was not to capture the fancy of theatre- and movie-goers for another decade, and Hammerstein and Mandel expressed the opinion that the public would not accept a musical play with such an involved story. Romberg was not to be dissuaded however, and while his two old partners agreed to work on the book and lyrics they refused pointblank to invest any money in the show, which Romberg was also producing with Lawrence Schwab.

Some seven years afterward, another musical show on Broadway was to deal with the problems of Freudian psychiatry, and from then on the stream of shows and motion pictures dealing with the subject was to prove endless. But when 'May Wine' opened, the first-nighters were only flabbergasted at the subtle intricacies of the story line, and when the performance was ended Romberg knew that he did not have the smash hit he expected.

After the opening there was the usual run of parties. He received the usual congratulations, but Lillian could tell his thoughts were far away. When they were back in their apartment

later he got into his slippers and red smoking jacket and began to walk up and down the room. "Lillian, that music tonight. It wasn't very good."

"I think you're trying to do too much again. I didn't want you to take on that radio show."

"No," he said, shaking his head. "I wrote the music for 'May Wine' before we went to Maine this summer. I wasn't doing anything else then. I wrote the best kind of music I could. Lillian, is 'May Wine' the best kind of music I can write now?"

"No," she said slowly. "But it wasn't very good music. Only you haven't pointed out the reason for that."

He stopped his nervous pacing and stared at her. "Can you point it out?"

"I think so," she said quietly. "Just sit down and let me try to collect my thoughts. I know exactly what I want to say and I want it to come out right."

He sat down obediently and lit a cigarette.

She put a finger to her lips. "Bunny, I don't think you have very good judgment in selecting books for yourself. You have said repeatedly that the show can only be as good as its book. You once told me about a show you produced when you had your own firm, a show with a mixture of dramatic acting and musical comedy and how it failed. You had your choice of book then and that's what came out. Now you picked this thing. Both ideas were not only wrong, but were especially wrong for *you*. You have your own field, Bunny, a field of emotional music, simple music of love. That's where you are at your best. You won't write a jazz show, you don't depend on smart sophisticated lyrics—your whole punch is emotion. Why, why in Heaven's name then, do you try to write music for something so complicated and out of your line as 'May Wine'?"

She paused. He said quickly, "Please go on, Bunny."

"You're not getting angry at me?"

"Good God no. This is the most intelligent thing that has been said to me in years."

"What did 'May Wine' give to you as you wrote the music?"

"Give to me?"

"What did you feel as you read it? As your mind was beginning to create the music?"

He thought for a few moments. "Not very much, now that I think of it."

"You see? The book left you cold. Not because it was a bad book. For the subject involved, it was a magnificent book. But because it wasn't *your* book. How could you expect yourself to write your kind of music when you yourself were wholly untouched by the story? Where could you put a Romberg song in a story that involves psychoanalysis, a man making a doll to look like his wife, the wife cheating with another man, the husband finally shooting the doll, thinking it was his wife. Where do you come off to deal with a story such as that? Where were any of the true, honest, simple values that gave you so much inspiration in 'The Student Prince'? Where was the love story that inspired you in 'Desert Song'? Where was the beautiful romance of 'New Moon'? Don't you realize, Bunny, you crippled yourself before you ever started working on this show? You just couldn't go anywhere, not you, with that story."

"So you think I should just stick to writing music and let someone else mastermind the plot?"

"Yes, Bunny, I do."

"You know, Lillian, I think you're right."

5.

They had arrived in Hollywood in April after he had completed the score of a new show he had written with Otto Harbach, called 'Forbidden Melody.' He had written the music

during the thirteen weeks of his radio broadcasting in New York and then had come to the West Coast to finish the remaining half of the twenty-six-week contract in Hollywood.

Upon arriving in California he was immediately signed up by Irving Thalberg to a four-week contract to write some additional music for his old operetta 'Maytime,' which Thalberg was making into a picture at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

When he reported to Thalberg's office to start his four-week contract, Thalberg's secretary told him that the producer was on the lot where his wife, Norma Shearer, was working in 'Romeo and Juliet.' The secretary suggested that he go up to the little cottage where Moss Hart, who was doing the script for 'Maytime,' had his office. "I'll have Mr. Thalberg get in touch with you as soon as he sends word or returns to his office," the girl said.

Romberg went up to Hart's office and was greeted with a shout of welcome from the playwright. "My God, Romy, I'm glad to see you!"

"I'm glad to see you too, Moss. How's the work coming?"

"What work? I finished my work a long time ago. I've been going crazy playing solitaire, waiting for Thalberg. At least with you around we can play some gin rummy."

"I'll have to leave as soon as Thalberg returns."

Hart smiled. "That is fair enough."

The producer did not return that day. The next day Romberg reported for his gin rummy game. The producer did not return that day either. For three and a half weeks Romberg and Hart played gin rummy. At last they received word that the producer was in his office. Romberg tossed away his cards and went to him. Thalberg smiled graciously. "I can't tell you how embarrassed I am but I've been spending all my time with my wife. There is so much involved with that picture I just couldn't get away."

"I know how those things are. How is it going?"

"Marvelous, really marvelous. But listen, I have to leave you again. I have to run back to the set. Why don't you find out where Moss Hart's office is—he's doing the script on your new picture —and get to know him. It will help when we start work."

Then Thalberg excused himself and rushed off. Romberg went to Hart's office and picked up his cards. "I didn't put the deck away," Hart said. "I knew you would be back."

The four-week contract with the studio was automatically extended and the gin rummy games continued for another few weeks. It was toward the end of the seventh week that Romberg finally was given his assignment: four new songs for 'Maytime.' He wrote the numbers. The gin rummy games started again.

At the end of the tenth week he found Thalberg and told him he had finished the music and that he had to leave for New York to start rehearsals on 'Forbidden Melody.'

"Just stay two more weeks, just two," Thalberg pleaded.

He remained for two more weeks and had the satisfaction of listening to Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy record the music, and watched Edmund Goulding, the director, shoot the first couple of thousand feet of film. Before returning to the east he signed a one-year contract with the studio, to begin on December 1, 1936.

In New York his personal fears were redoubled. During rehearsals he was keenly aware that something was lacking in 'Forbidden Melody.' He could not put his finger on it. It was as though he played a piano and the sounds came out wrong. He listened to the music and asked himself again and again, "What is lacking, what is missing, why was it good before and not now? What have I lost and why have I lost it?"

One day he received the startling news that Thalberg had died suddenly. The story that Moss Hart had written was shelved by

Hunt Stromberg, who took over the reins of production. A new story was prepared, eliminating thousands of feet of film already shot—together with the four songs Romberg had written. The change and elimination was typical Hollywood business, but, in his distorted state of mind, all Romberg could think of was that his music had been thrown out.

'Forbidden Melody' opened in November. It was received coolly. Harbach worked like a madman to patch it together. It was useless.

Romberg seemed to age overnight. Lillian watched him, her heart filled with aching. There was nothing she could do, or say. It was a terrible thing, she thought, to be unable to share his torment, but his loneliness and fears were his own.

"This is what makes it funny," he said. "This is what makes it so funny. They're going to make 'Desert Song' into a picture again at Warner Brothers. I'm told that this is a great distinction. It is the first time they've ever made a musical twice. They even want me to write a few new numbers."

"Oh, my dearest, that *is* good news!"

"Good news?" he asked, with an odd expression. "It's kind of late in the game for me to feel excitement about anything that happens to 'Desert Song.' That's old Romberg. We *know* people like that. It's the new Romberg I'm worrying about. Bunny, I think I'm finished on Broadway."

"You must not even think that!" she said fiercely.

"Something's gone wrong. I can't do it here any more. I don't want to do it. For so many years now I've gone along, depending on so many other people to make things right. Each morning I wake up and wonder whether my book writer feels like working today, whether the lyric writer is in the mood, how the star feels. When I don't have a man for the book I'm helpless—there aren't a lot of men who can write my kind of shows, there's more money and less risk turning out the books for girl shows. Why worry

about an operetta when a few gags and some clever music and dance routines will bring in all the people a theatre will hold." His voice rose with his anger. "I think I'm just trying to crucify myself bucking something that's out of hand now. Maybe I'm too oldfashioned for Broadway. Maybe I'm just too tired to lie awake nights worrying whether the book writer is sleeping soundly. There's Hollywood, Bunny. With all the delays and all the crazy ways of doing things they offer a bigger canvas there. I've got to find myself again, Bunny, and maybe I can do that in California. I'm a gone goose here. I don't think I could take another flop.

"I'm going to cut all the strings here. I'm going to resign from the ASCAP board. I'm going to quit as president of SPA. I'm going to leave tilting at the Washington windmills to somebody younger than I am. I feel like an old man, Bunny, and I'm tired, so damn tired."

On the train, he stared from the window of their compartment. The wheels seemed to have a different sound than ever before.

"Listen to them, Bunny," he said. "Listen to the wheels. Don't they say something different to you too this time? I've cut my strings. I've burned my bridges. We're not just going to California to visit this time. I've got to get out of the rut I'm in. I've got to get away from Vienna, for instance. That is all *passé* anyway. European backgrounds! Maybe that's what's dating me. Maybe that's what's holding something back. In 'May Wine' the locale was Vienna. In 'Melody' the locale was Paris. In 'Forbidden Melody' the background was Europe again. In 'The Night is Young' we had Vienna again. I think perhaps I've got myself stranded in Europe and I have to get out of it. I think I'll refuse anything from now on without an American background. I must have drained that cup dry."

He was silent for a long while. She listened to the clicking of the wheels.

"It's been a long time in New York," he said. "Twenty-seven long years. Just think. 1909. Another age, another time. I think I haven't gotten away from that time."

"What do you mean," she asked slowly, "when you say we are not going to California to visit this time?"

"Perhaps we can settle in Beverly Hills. I know how much you love California. Maybe we can find a house there."

"Are you serious about that, Bunny?"

"Why not? It's the place for us to be. I'm fed up with the stage, with Broadway. Good talent is almost impossible to find on Broadway and as soon as you discover a new singer the movies grab him or her from right under your nose. It used to be the dream of singers to be in a Broadway hit. Now they hope it will be a hit just so that a Hollywood talent scout can take them out of the show and put them in pictures and a couple of months after your show opens you have to start substituting. All the talent is in Hollywood. All the money is there. Production costs are getting so high show business has changed altogether. You have to cut corners, scrape, try to save money every way. It's not like the old days when Ziegfeld and the Shuberts didn't worry about expenses. Now it's almost impossible to *find* producers. Maybe the answer is in California. Listen to the wheels, Bunny, maybe I'll find out there whatever it is I've lost on Broadway."

XXI

The man asked, "Is this bungalow suitable, Mr. Romberg?"

"It looks fine."

"How would you like it furnished?"

"It's furnished now, isn't it?"

The man waved his hand. "How would you like it refurnished?"

"It looks fine now."

The man looked astonished. "But, Mr. Romberg, nobody accepts a bungalow on the lot that was furnished by anyone else."

"Well, my friend, what would you suggest?"

"Monterey? Monterey looks perfectly beautiful in these bungalows."

"Monterey it is."

"And the piano, Mr. Romberg. Is that suitable?"

"It is excellent."

"I'm a little embarrassed that it is only a baby grand. But the bungalow is not too large."

"It is a superb piano."

"And now the wallpaper."

"The wallpaper?"

"If we are going to put Monterey furniture in here this paper will not be satisfactory," the man said.

"Well, my friend, and what do you suggest in the way of wallpaper?"

"A cacti pattern, Mr. Romberg. A cacti pattern in green. It would look just wonderful."

"Done."

"And your secretary."

"What about her? A cacti pattern too?"

"Oh, Mr. Romberg!"

"What do you suggest?"

"How tall would you like her to be?"

"Hm. Say, about five feet five?"

The man wrote it down carefully. "Color of hair?"

"A blonde. Surely a blonde!"

The man wrote down 'blonde.' "Talkative or the silent type?"

"Tell you what I'm going to do," Romberg said. "I'm going to leave that up to you!"

"I won't disappoint you, Mr. Romberg. You will find everything changed by tomorrow morning. If I had known your tastes I would have had it ready for you when you arrived."

"That's all right, my friend. Don't forget the cacti pattern!"

"Oh, I won't, Mr. Romberg. I won't."

The man left and he lit a cigarette. He was back in Hollywood all right.

He left the little two-room cottage that had been assigned to him in the Metro studio and went to see the producer, his old friend, William Anthony McGuire, with whom he had worked on 'Rosalie' for Ziegfeld. When he entered his office he held out his arms. "Bill! Bill McGuire. You don't know how happy I am to be working with you here. My God, this will be like old times!"

McGuire, now an author-producer in the studio, shook his

hand warmly. "I just hope you're going to like your first assignment here," he said somewhat dubiously.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, Romy, you have to understand that in a big studio we have to make a lot of different kinds of pictures. We have to satisfy big audiences."

"What are you trying to say, Bill?" he asked uneasily.

"Well, there's nothing Viennese about this picture."

Romberg relaxed in his chair. "Say that again, Bill. Say it again and say it slowly."

"We're going to make a musical version of the old Belasco show, 'The Girl of the Golden West.' It's got an American background and I hope you won't mind that too much."

"No, Bill. I won't mind that."

"Good, Romy, good! We have a great cast—Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy for the leads. We're thinking about Walter Pidgeon, Ray Bolger, Leo Carillo, H. B. Warner, Cliff Edwards, Monty Woolley, Noah Beery, and a couple of others in supporting roles."

As he listened to the names he thought again how the motion-picture world was a world of its own. Where on Broadway, he thought, could a cast like that be assembled?

"You can have anything you need," McGuire went on easily. "Are they treating you okay?"

"The 'A' treatment. *With* cacti wallpaper."

"Good. I can see you're being well handled. Just ask for anything you want and you'll get it. Before you've finished asking for it. We have a green light and nothing is too good to make this picture a success. There is just one thing. We've just started on the script. So be patient, Romy. Don't get excited. Take it easy. As soon as I have forty pages together I'll shoot them along to you."

2.

The weeks went by. It was freezing winter in New York. He surrendered to the California sunshine. At frequent intervals he made discreet inquiries about the script and he was told to take it easy. Just collect his check each week and take it easy.

There was something new in the studios. Artists of all kinds were fleeing from Europe because of the Hitler terror, and many of them made their way to Hollywood. He recognized old friends he had known in Europe. With no work assigned to him, he devoted himself to these refugees. His own European background provided him with understanding and sympathy for them. And he knew what it was to be a stranger in a strange land.

About six weeks after his contract started he was finally handed some thirty pages of script and told to get to work. Gus Kahn was writing the lyrics and the men began to work together. They were finished with three songs when they were notified that the script was being changed and that the thirty pages were now obsolete. He was told to take it easy.

The weeks became months. His old restlessness reappeared. He wrote, rewrote, changed, added, subtracted. As fast as he wrote music, the script was changed. His life became a series of story conferences which seemed always to end with the same decision: scrap what had been done up to then and start again.

He asked McGuire if he could be assigned to another picture until 'The Girl of the Golden West' was ready for music. McGuire soothed him. "This assignment is the most important one in the studio."

"I understand," Romberg said. "Take it easy."

His boredom increased. He was gaited to the tight, swift schedule of Broadway production and the studio tempo had him

biting his nails with impatience. He arrived at the home Lillian and he were renting one afternoon, and poured a drink.

"Well, Bunny?" she asked. "What today?"

"A conference."

"Ah."

"I can understand all these delays," he said, "I understand them perfectly. Whatever my own opinion is about them, I realize it is a kind of striving for perfection. In a way it is a paradise for an artist. There is no hurry. A man is given all the time to do his best. Every change is made with the idea of improvement. I appreciate all that and yet I'm not used to it. I'm used to working under pressure and with so much time on my hands I'm just falling apart."

She smiled. "Well, Bunny, I'll give you something to occupy your thoughts. You really like California, don't you?"

"It's a wonderful place. If I only had something to do."

"All your best friends live out here—Frank Mandel, Jerry Kern, George Gershwin and Ira, Oscar Hammerstein, Gus Kahn, Arthur Fried—I could go on endlessly."

"All right, Lillian. Let's have it."

"Well, here is a little problem for you to wrestle with. I've found a lovely home. I want you to look at it and decide whether we ought to buy it."

"A home?"

"Yes, Bunny, you know, a place to live in. A place to buy furniture and leave it there. An address."

"Where is it?"

"Beverly Hills. It's right next door to George Gershwin's house. Oh, Bunny, it's just the right place for us. It's not too big and still it's big enough for you to have your own private studio and office. The studio could have its own entrance. And there's a garden . . . oh, it's beautiful!"

He raised his eyebrows. "It looks as though you've done all

the thinking already. All that's left for me to do is sign the check."

"Oh, no," she said. "You've got to like it too."

3.

He looked at the long room. "This is one studio where I can do some work," he said.

They moved into their new home, the first home they had ever owned, in May. By then he had reported daily at the motion-picture studio for almost five months and still had not written a bar of music which was to be used in the picture.

The home in Beverly Hills was as attractive as Lillian had said it was. He told her to decorate the house any way she wanted to—that his concern was the studio he was going to build. He had remodeled a room sixty-five feet long and thirty feet wide, three walls of which were shelved to hold the music library he had been accumulating over the years, and which now totaled some six thousand volumes. The fourth wall was entirely of glass.

He furnished the studio with two grand pianos and an organ, and he brought down engineers from the NBC studio in Hollywood to wire the room for recording and to make it as acoustically perfect as possible. When they were finished an orchestra of as many as thirty-two men could record in the room. Music of any kind in the studio could be piped throughout the house from one of a half-dozen different outlets.

Next to the studio he had a small office in which he set up his vast library of recordings, as well as turntables to make new recordings. He had controls built next to the pianos and organ so that when he was ready to record music he merely threw a switch and whatever he played was recorded by one of the instruments in the office.

He had plenty of time for everything. They were still holding conferences at the studio.

"It's odd the way a woman needs this, Bunny," Lillian said. "We've lived in so many places and we've always lived well. But a woman needs this. A woman needs a home."

"The first requisite when taking up abode in a new community is to be neighborly," he said. "I think I will go next door and be neighborly with George and Ira."

"You be neighborly, Bunny," she said. "Me, I'm just going to sit down in our living room and keep telling myself that this is really our home."

When he returned she asked, "Did you have a nice neighborly visit?"

He shook his head. "George is sick."

"What's the matter with him?"

"I don't know. He's just sick."

4.

The weeks went by. The studio appeared to be getting no further along with 'the most important assignment in the studio.' He still was not called upon to write any music. He hired a boat and went fishing.

On a Friday morning in July he went next door to see how George Gershwin was feeling. "We're not going fishing this weekend," he told George's brother, Ira. "I'll be around if there's anything I can do."

"Thanks, Romy," Ira said. "I think just about everything is being done."

An operation was performed Sunday morning in a Hollywood hospital. Ira and his wife returned home just before nine o'clock that morning. Romberg asked anxiously how his friend had come through the operation.

"All right, I guess," Ira said. "The doctor said there was nothing to worry about. The operation itself was successful. He said it would take a couple of hours for George to come out of the anesthetic and for us to go home and get some rest."

"Thank God for that," Romberg said.

It was less than an hour later that the hospital called and said that George Gershwin had died without ever regaining consciousness.

5.

The studio barber lathered his face swiftly and expertly. Romberg closed his eyes. He heard his name called. He lifted his head. It was Gus Kahn, who had collaborated with him on the fifteen numbers he had finally turned out for 'The Girl of the Golden West.'

"Romy," Kahn said with excitement. "I've just received word from the front office that Louis B. Mayer would like to listen to the score and lyrics at four o'clock this afternoon."

"We'll play it for him," Romberg said phlegmatically.

At the appointed time they marched into the office of the studio head. There were McGuire, Kahn, and Romberg, the latter with the sheaf of music under his arm. In the office, surrounding the boss of the studio, were supervisors, producers, secretaries. Their faces were frozen. Romberg thought: judge and jury.

Mayer greeted the newcomers affably enough and then lapsed into studied solemnity. Romberg bowed and then sat down at the baby grand piano located in one corner of the office. It was a very beautiful piano. It was painted a brilliant white and was immaculately clean. He spread the music on the rack. He ran his hands up and down the keys and found the piano was not quite in tune and two keys were missing.

He started to play. He finished the first number, after finding

that the pedal of the piano didn't work. He looked around. All faces were watching the face of Louis B. Mayer and the face of Louis B. Mayer was inscrutable. Romberg started the second number and he suddenly was overwhelmed with the idiocy of his own performance at that moment, trying to demonstrate a new score on a broken, out-of-tune piano. He stood up and gathered the music.

"Look, L. B.," he said quietly. "I have worked on this score for nine months. For nine months, week after week, I've collected a nice fat check from you. Actually I could have written the fifteen numbers in four weeks time and with less difficulty than I had taking nine months to do them. If you could have waited nine months for the score you can wait a little longer. In three weeks I will be happy to demonstrate the music and lyrics in my own studio at home, with an orchestra. You are all invited to attend." Then he smiled courteously and said, "Good afternoon, gentlemen."

6.

He had not spent half his life in the theatre for nothing. He had the music orchestrated, took thirty-two musicians from the studio and rehearsed them. Lillian had a buffet dinner prepared.

The guests arrived—L. B. Mayer; the two stars, Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy; studio official Eddy Mannix; Benny Thaw; Herbert Stothart, who was to conduct the music for the picture; Robert Z. Leonard, the director; Nat Finston, head of the Metro music department; his old friend from Warner Brothers days, Bill Koenig, now manager of the Metro studio.

They were seated in the patio as though for a formal concert. Romberg stepped up before the orchestra and began to play the music. Miss MacDonald began to hum the tune; she rose and

went up to the dais and began to sing the song. Eddy joined her.

When the music ended there was loud applause. Romberg told the musicians there were refreshments for them in the studio. Then he went over to Mayer. The studio head complimented him warmly. In a moment he was surrounded by others, echoing his words.

"How different it sounds with an orchestra," a supervisor said.

"I never heard such an outstanding score," a secretary said.

"Beautiful, beautiful music," an assistant director said.

"Are the musicians still here?" Mayer asked.

"Yes," Romberg said. "I set up a bar for them in the studio. Trust musicians to hang around for free food and drinks."

"Good," Mayer said. "I'd like to hear some of the numbers again."

That was the supreme tribute.

XXII

Romberg and his wife slipped very naturally and quickly into the cushioned Hollywood life. 'The Girl of the Golden West,' finally completed, had had a double premiere, in New York and Hollywood, in March of 1938. When his year's contract had run out it had been renewed for another year, but as the months passed he was given nothing to do. A light-opera company was organized and a four-week schedule of revivals was presented. The shows done were 'Blossom Time,' 'The Student Prince,' 'The Desert Song,' and 'Rio Rita,' which, Lillian commented, made a nice balance. Romberg, growing desperate with inactivity, worked with the company and conducted the orchestra during the week 'The Student Prince' played. The revivals, put on in the Philharmonic Auditorium, grossed the unprecedented sum of $50,000 a week.

After that, nothing. They entertained lavishly. They had two automobiles. They had a box at the Hollywood Bowl. They were entertained lavishly. Romberg rented another fishing boat and fished in Mexican waters.

They sat on the terrace of their home one afternoon. Romberg let the afternoon paper slip to the tiled floor. He watched his butler moving unobtrusively, replenishing the ice in the lime

punch. He nodded when the butler asked if he wanted a refill. He sipped the drink slowly and stared at his wife.

"A penny, Bunny," she said.

"Are you happy, Lillian?"

"How could I help being happy?"

He waved his hand. "All this?"

"All this and everything else. You, Bunny. It's been awfully good."

He lifted the glass to his lips.

"And you?" she asked.

"I suppose I must be happy too," he said. "We have a beautiful home, friends, enough money. How can *I* help being happy?"

"What is it, darling?"

"I don't know. I *do* know, of course. I'm bored to death."

"With me?"

"No, not with you." He broke into a grin and for a moment his face was as she had remembered it from long ago. "But with everything else. I wasn't built for this, Bunny. The wheels have been turning too fast for too long. I can't slow down this way. Look at me—sitting around, drinking, going to parties, fishing —everything, but not working. Collecting a big check each week, but for what? It isn't honest to live this way."

"The studio doesn't seem to mind."

"No, but *I* mind. A man isn't built to accept money for nothing. At least I'm not. My God, when I started out I wrote three, four, five shows a year. Writing the music, helping to cast, rehearsing, one after the other. Now look at me. I write a few songs. The plot of the picture is changed. I am told to discard the songs. A month or two later I write another song. The plot is changed again. At the end of the year I've got a dozen numbers written. Then I sit around months, months, doing nothing, waiting for another assignment." He set the glass on the table. "I'm too trained a warhorse to be slowed down this way—and I'm not yet

old enough to be put out to pasture." He picked up the glass again. "I'm sorry, Bunny, I don't want to spoil your evening. When are the guests coming?"

"Usual time."

"Food come along all right?"

"Oh, yes."

"The marvelous Hollywood catering system! What would we do without it? The same outfit supplies everyone so that every party is exactly like the last. There is never a change—the same cold ham, cold turkey or roast beef, two or three different kinds of salads, hot spaghetti, pastries, coffee, rolls and butter. The turkey is always on the right-hand side of the buffet. The ham or roast beef on the left. Two hours after the party is over everything is cleaned up like magic."

"Is that bad, Bunny?"

"No. But it's sterile. It's a kind of sterility that robs even so ancient a gesture as having friends in to dine of its real meaning. It's like the studios themselves. A make-believe world is created there and in your house you give make-believe parties. A party should mean the smell of cooking, private little family recipes, anxiety, excitement, and then satisfaction. What do we do? A telephone call is made. Robots arrive with prepared food. Guests arrive and eat the same identical stuff they serve themselves. They leave. Robots arrive and remove the debris." He finished the drink and stood up. "We invite each other to our homes in this town but what do we give of ourselves to our guests? Come, Bunny, we better start dressing."

2.

The summer slipped into fall and there was still no assignment from the studio. Jerry Kern, Frank Mandel, and he organized a Sunday bridge club. They bought a dog, a Dalmatian,

and built a large house in the patio for him. They showed the dog and took several ribbons.

When his contract expired at the end of November, he declined to renew it. He looked around. He considered joining a group of friends as an independent producer. He considered making pictures in Mexico. He considered making musical shorts.

He made short trips with his wife. The Los Angeles Light Opera Company started a second season of revivals. He attended a performance of 'The New Moon.' He listened to the audience applauding music. It still stood, he thought. When he returned home that night he paced the floor for hours after Lillian went to bed. The years were passing and he was not growing younger and he was doing nothing.

He had listened more and more to the music that was so popular. He had watched young people jitterbugging, jumping up and down to unintelligible music—unintelligible by every standard he had been trained to judge music. He had lived and worked through many changing phases of American musical taste but never before anything like this. He had watched the turkey trot, cakewalk, Charleston, Black Bottom, all the delirious dances of years gone by, and he thought that they were stately measures compared to the hysterical gyrations he now could see everywhere.

What could he offer to such an audience? How could the man who had written the sentimental melodies of 'The Student Prince' say anything to a pair of hepcats?

Europe was plunged into another war. He gave his thanks that he had no ties left on the continent that for a second time in his lifetime was trying to destroy itself. He thought of the last war; it was back a quarter of a century. Perhaps he was back a quarter of a century as well. Perhaps it would be better if he never attempted to write again. He could rest on his laurels. There were a few operettas that had crossed the imaginary line. There was

'Show Boat,' and there was 'The Vagabond King,' and there was 'Porgy and Bess,' and there were others, and there were one or two of his. He could quit now. He could quit now and he would not be forgotten.

XXIII

"Of course you will do it," Hammerstein said. "You can't resist it. Try to remember, Romy. Broadway. Opening night. Excitement. People streaming into the theatre. What else can give it to you? Movies pay—but show business, real show business . . . well, you know it as well as I do. There's nothing like it, Romy."

It was the fall of 1940. He had written nothing since the picture, 'The Girl of the Golden West,' three years before. He had not had a Broadway show in four years. Hammerstein, lately back in Hollywood from New York, had written an original, set in New Orleans and wanted him to do the music.

It was tempting. Everything that Hammerstein had said. Writing under pressure again. Rehearsals. Casting. He had forgotten what it was like. He had turned almost vegetable in California.

"Let me see the script," he said, already sold.

"Good, Romy," Hammerstein said enthusiastically. "I know you'll do it."

He read the book. He liked it. Then he spoke to Lillian. He was afraid almost to admit it but he was frightened. He had not been frightened twenty-five years before but now he was frightened. "I feel like an old man stepping out of the past, Bunny," he said.

"It's like stepping back into a new world, like a blind man trying to see again. Look at the music that is so successful today. I won't write jazz. I never will."

"People still love music, your kind of music," she said, racked at the sight of her husband afraid. "You know what happens when they revive the old shows at the Auditorium here."

He agreed to start work on the show. The newspapers announced that a new Romberg-Hammerstein operetta was in the making. The announcements gave him a childish satisfaction. It still meant something, he thought.

2.

He reentered his world in more ways than one. The contract between the radio broadcasters and ASCAP was due to expire at the end of 1940 and the association was insisting upon a higher percentage for the new contract being drawn up. The federal government, that summer, had started a suit against ASCAP charging anti-trust violation and the association members accused the broadcasters of being responsible for the suit.

As Romberg started work on the new operetta, Irving Caesar, who had taken over the presidency of the Song Writers' Protective Association in 1937 when Romberg had resigned to go to the coast, started negotiations with the music publishers for a new basic minimum contract for the song writers, and in order to strengthen his hand in these negotiations had asked each of the song writers who were members of the SPA to assign the mechanical rights for their music in trust to SPA.

Romberg studied this assignment and decided that the manner in which it was drawn up made it impossible for a composer for musical productions with obligations under the Dramatists' Guild contract to Broadway producers, to sign the assignment. Caesar

refused to make any changes. Romberg called a meeting of some twenty-five West Coast music writers and they resigned in a body from SPA.

The step was a difficult one for Romberg, who had been a charter member of SPA and its president for so many years, and who sympathized so strongly with the chief aims of the association. On the other hand, he felt the old exhilaration. After so many years of doing nothing he again was deep in the turmoil of his craft: writing music for a new show, sharing the troubles of ASCAP, fighting the SPA.

His step lightened. His shoulders straightened. He hummed and whistled about the house. He wrote and received innumerable letters, telegrams. He was on the telephone at all hours.

He received a request from an old friend, Richard Berger, a manager for the firm of Schwab and Mandel in the old days, now manager for the St. Louis Municipal Light Opera Company, which played a twelve-week open-air season, asking if it would be possible to open the season the following summer with the premiere of the new operetta, which was tentatively called 'New Orleans.' Romberg checked with Hammerstein and both men agreed it would be an excellent opportunity to break the show in on the road. The producer in New York was to be Max Gordon.

On January 1, 1941, the broadcasters banned all ASCAP music from the air. The radio stations organized Broadcasting Music, Inc., to supply music for radio and another battle started. Overnight the most popular piece of music in the country was 'Jeannie with the Light-Brown Hair.'

Romberg, watching the fight closely, said one afternoon to Jerry Kern after one of their weekly bridge games, "How foolish we all were. We had supposed that the radio stations could not exist without our music, without the music of Gershwin, Victor Herbert, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, and the rest of us who are members of ASCAP. And look what happens. The programs go on

just the same. Music from the public domain is used and no one really misses us at all."

The composers and lyric writers on the West Coast organized and inaugurated a campaign to enlighten the public on their side of the dispute. Romberg took up the cudgels with his old vigor, glorying in his energy, which had slept so long. He delivered a lecture at the University of Southern California on American music and American copyright, and explained the basic principles of the fight with the broadcasters. He addressed a newspaper publishers' convention at Del Monte. He cooperated in making motion-picture shorts, appeared in newsreels.

On March 4 the members of the board of ASCAP made their peace with the United States Government, and then sought to resolve their difficulties with the broadcasters. Meanwhile Caesar finally agreed to change the clause in the SPA assignment to which Romberg had objected, and he and fifteen other composers rejoined their old organization.

During these months of activity he finished the score of 'New Orleans.' In the summer of 1941, after almost five years in California, he left the coast and journeyed to St. Louis to start rehearsals on the new show.

'New Orleans' opened in St. Louis to some 7200 persons and was a success. The name was changed—of course the name had to be changed at least once—from 'New Orleans' to 'Sunny River.' Jubilant at the reception accorded the operetta by the audiences in St. Louis, Romberg and Lillian left for New York to make ready for the Broadway opening. "It's like the old days, eh, Bunny?" he asked. "Oscar was right. The movies have a lot. But show business . . . you never can quite get it out of your blood. I've got to do it. It's more important to have a success now than it was at the beginning when I had nothing to live up to."

3.

'Sunny River' started rehearsing for its New York opening at the beginning of November, just as ASCAP and the broadcasters reached an agreement. Hammerstein and Romberg took the cessation of the hostilities as a good augury. The men worked together smoothly and happily; they fit each other well. Years of collaboration had made them almost psychic in their understanding of the foibles and quirks of each other. They seemed to know what the other thought before the thought was uttered.

Romberg was unashamedly happy. The more he was caught again in the excitement of Broadway the more his placid life on the West Coast seemed a form of retirement. The only jolt he received was the news of the sudden death in Hollywood of his friend Gus Kahn at the age of fifty-five. Kahn, who had worked with him on 'The Girl of the Golden West,' had telephoned him just before he left Hollywood, wishing him good luck with the new show. At that time he seemed to be in the best of health.

Whatever 'Sunny River' had that made the people in St. Louis happy, it was not what the New York theatre-goers wanted. The operetta opened in the St. James Theatre on December 3, 1941, and even then, a number of thousand miles away, Japanese pilots were being briefed on the details of ships and installations at Pearl Harbor.

The critics were not enthusiastic about the operetta, which was essentially tragic in story. Ticket brokers were cautious. Three days later the United States was at war with Japan. A number of shows closed down almost immediately and bookings on future shows were canceled. 'Sunny River' was not amusing enough to ride out the first shock of the reaction to war. It was closed in three weeks.

"I've gone past my station, Bunny," he said quietly. He had been over-bruised. He felt nothing, not even hurt. "I can see and hear it all around me. All the people want today is jitterbug music and boogie-woogie. My God, when I think of how I've worked. Getting up morning after morning, year after year, rushing to the phone to see if my book writer was feeling all right that day, or if my lyric writer was in the mood to work. Never alone, always needing collaborators, working, dreaming, struggling, and finally now and then turning out a piece of music I wasn't too ashamed of."

"Everything is wrong in these horrible days."

"I'm now two wars away from my time, Bunny. My time was pre-World War One and I managed to carry over into the post-war world, post-World War One. But this war will make me only so much more obsolescent. I feel as though I belonged in an antique shop or on the rolls in an ancient music box. Who in America is playing my kind of music? And who would want to listen to it?"

He left the house and started to walk through the city streets. He looked for signs of the war; it should be in the faces, he thought; it should be visible somewhere. The people hurried and pushed and shouldered their way along the way they had since he first met New Yorkers more than thirty years before. There was nothing of the war in New York. In little places throughout the country perhaps there would be signs, but New York had absorbed the war.

He heard his name called. He looked up. A burly man held out his hand. He recognized him, an acquaintance of his from Hollywood. The man shouted, "Romy, *hello!*" He accented the hello. Romberg recalled, for no reason, that the last time he had seen him, the man had called him Mr. Romberg.

"Hello," he said.

"This is a pleasure," he said. "Let's go somewhere and have a drink. Have to catch a train to Washington but have a little time. Always a little time for old friends!"

They went into a bar.

"What are you doing here?" Romberg asked.

"Called to Washington," he said, with the special tone in his voice that all persons called to Washington in the first months of the war seemed to assume almost automatically, as though the tone were put on like a uniform, or, rather, in lieu of a uniform. "Some special job. Can't talk too much about it. You understand, Romy. We're at war now, you understand."

"Sure."

"Saw your last show, Romy. Too bad, too bad."

"It was too serious," Romberg admitted.

The man leaned forward confidentially. "Romy, I feel very close to you, very close to you. You know how I tried to get you to change studios. You know how I have respected your work. I've been wanting to tell this to you for a long time and this is as good a time as any to tell it. Never know what's going to happen, with a war on and everything. May be the last chance in a long time."

"Tell me what?"

"Well, old man, I'll be frank. Frankness pays in matters like this and I'll take the privilege of an old friend and call a spade a spade. Romy, old man, unless you're careful and mend your ways you're going to find yourself a has-been!" He leaned back with the air of a man who has revealed a state secret.

"Mend my ways?" Romberg asked evenly.

"You know what I mean, Romy." He extracted a silver cigar-case from his pocket, offered Romberg a cigar although Romberg was smoking a cigarette, extracted one for himself after a long deliberation, lit it slowly, and then said: "You know what I mean. You have to move with the times. You were always behind

the times, Romy, and now you're further behind than ever before. I'm talking like a friend, old man. Why don't you take your old songs and fix them up, if you can't compose new ones?"

Romberg gripped the arms of his chair. "What do you mean, if I can't compose new ones?"

The man waved his cigar in the air patronizingly. "Now don't get your dander up, Romy. I'm busy as hell and there are a million things I ought to be doing right now before I hop off for Washington. But I'm friend enough of yours to take time out to tell you this. I'm talking like a pal. You know that your recent stuff has been below par. But the old stuff is still good. Only it *is* oldfashioned. But you can fix them up, speed them up a little. People would still remember them and sing them and dance to them."

Romberg thought, I must try to keep myself under control, I must talk quietly. "I've fought against jazz all my life," he said. "I've tried to write ballads, love songs, waltzes."

"That's just it," the man said quickly. "That stuff is dead. Nobody wants sentimental gooey music any more. People like smart stuff, songs with words like they might use to their own girl friends or boy friends. Who would ever sing the things nowadays that you have in your songs? Cole Porter stuff, Noel Coward, that's the thing today. Romy, Berlin has kept up with the times, why can't you?" He looked suddenly at his wristwatch. It was a new wristwatch. Romberg knew that it had been a gift from the studio to the hero going off to the wars. He could visualize the party at which it undoubtedly had been presented. "Got to go, Romy, got to go. Would love to spend more time with you but there are a couple of things I have to attend to. Got to have a new will drawn up and so on. Never know what may happen in a war." He called loudly for the check, insisted on paying, held out his hand, and said: "I'm off. But remember what I said, Romy. Got to move

with the times, got to move with the times. Goodbye, old man. Take it easy. I'll drop you a card from China."

When he was gone Romberg moved to another table and ordered a double scotch and drank it slowly.

4.

He stood quietly backstage in the Cleveland theatre and watched the acts rehearse. The acrobats flexed their muscles. The tumblers began a few practice flips. Jugglers tossed rings into the air. Mitzi Green sang out a greeting. Happy Felton, the master of ceremonies, waved his hand. "Be ready for you in a little while, Romy," he called out.

He wondered what Adam Romberg would have thought. Sigmund Romberg, at the age of fifty-five, now was a vaudeville entertainer. He had to play four shows a day on weekdays and five on Saturdays and Sundays. ("Get a goodlooking babe in the act," he had been told, "and you'll wow them!")

He had been caught, in the dreary days of a few months ago, with the suggestion that people would like to listen to him play a piano on a stage. He had been offered a booking at the Roxy Theatre in New York to start, but had preferred to break in this new kind of thing out of town.

For the act he had selected his best music of the past. (Of the past, he had thought bitterly. I am now an old man living in my own past.) He had made special arrangements for the regular ten-piece theatre orchestras he would find on the circuit. He hired a girl and a young man to sing the songs. After thirty years on Broadway, after years in Hollywood and on the radio, he now was a peddler of old songs. ("You're a personality," the booking agent had said. "People will pay to hear you push your old stuff.")

On this morning in May, at the ungodly hour of nine o'clock

in the morning, he had reported to the theatre to break in his act with the acrobats, tumblers, jugglers who were to play with him.

It took him just a week for the full queasiness of the situation to overwhelm him. He declined further bookings and returned to New York, and began active work again as president of the SPA, an office which he had resumed.

5.

The SPA had run down. If he could no longer function in his trade, he could use his name and reputation to bring this union back to life. He tore into the books. Members were in arrears. Meetings were unattended. He started a vigorous campaign to reorganize the group. He dictated letters, buttonholed friends, talked.

In his official capacity as head of the SPA he had an army at his command, and everywhere there were demands for entertainers for the servicemen readying themselves to fight the war, for the merchant-marine heroes who already had their taste of the war on the lonely water stretches of the oceans. He organized composers into teams and arranged for one-hour shows. Himself, he had his own team, he playing the piano, singers singing old songs and new songs.

He played at all hours, on battleships newly berthed in dark harbors, in coast guard stations, at army camps, at military and naval hospitals up and down the coast. He was invited, out of the blue, to have luncheon in Philadelphia with the dean and head football coach at Temple University. Puzzled at the oddness of the invitation, he went there wondering why he was wanted. Then it came out. On account of the heavy scholastic schedule the football team could only play at night. Could he write a special march for this doughty team?

Returning to New York he removed from the trunk the durable 'Brooklyn Navy Yard—Manhattan Theatre—Swift Jubilee' march and gave it a new title, 'The Night Owls' March.' He got a friend to write some lyrics and presented it to the school. But this was to be the last time the music could be used. This time he had it published and arranged to have the royalties assigned to Temple University. "Next time," he said to Lillian, "I'll have to write a new one."

The war work was many things to him. It was, first of all, his personal thanks, the second installment of his debt of gratitude, the first having been paid in another war at another time. For himself it was a purge, a severe purge, of the mental sickness that tormented him constantly. He worked day after day, night after night, pleading with the military and naval officials not to hesitate to call him at any hour when he could do some good. When he fell into bed he slept in sheer exhaustion and there was no time to wonder about his own personal place in a new world.

But as he played before the myriad faces of the men who had their own personal places in this new world, he found something new, something he had never dared to hope for. He found that his music was liked. He thought that he could not interpret too much from the attention given to him: there was nowhere else the young men could go, and if they indicated disapproval they probably would have been punished.

But he could not be entirely wrong about those faces. He saw intensity of feeling, raptness, wet eyes, nostalgic expressions, hard young tired faces softened in sudden tenderness. The music did mean something to them and he thought that perhaps it was because the danger now inherent in their lives had stripped them clean so they could indulge in sentiment without thinking themselves false to the code of the modern young American. Perhaps, he thought, playing softly while singers produced his music, men

who are preparing to encounter, or who have already encountered death regain a primitive simplicity; perhaps the sophistication is peeled off, like a veneer. Perhaps the jungle beat of jazz was not answer enough to men who have been torn from everything of value to them, perhaps forever.

XXIV

THERE were things about Harry Squires that reminded him of Ziegfeld. The men looked nothing alike but Squires had something of the old master-showman's temperament. A human dynamo, nervous, full of ideas, some of them good, he appeared never to have heard of the United States mail as a means of communication. If Squires could not get on the telephone or send a wire he was virtually tonguetied.

Squires was in charge of the concert department of the William Morris Agency. After one of the concerts for servicemen Squires asked Romberg if he would have a midnight snack with him. He did not wait for the food to arrive. "Mr. Romberg, that vaudeville act of yours was wrong, all wrong."

"I found that out myself," Romberg agreed dryly. "That's why I quit."

"Yeah, but you quit too much. The place for you is on the concert stage."

"Concert stage?"

"Listen to me, Mr. Romberg. There is one place that can let you spread out the way you have to, the concert stage. A full evening's concert. Your own orchestra. A couple of singers, some gorgeous dames—of course they got to sing but they can be

lookers too—, it couldn't miss. Not only your own stuff but all the music like yours."

"You make it sound very simple," Romberg grinned. "You forget there is a war on. A concert tour means bookings on railroad trains, hotels, buses. They tell me it's pretty hard to get seats on trains nowadays."

"Mr. Romberg," Squires said vehemently. "That isn't your business. That's my end of the business. You collect yourself an orchestra and some singers and leave the rest to me. I'll book you wherever you want to go—and I'll see that you get there."

When he reached home he broached the idea to Lillian. "I'm not thinking of it seriously," he said. "Not really seriously."

"Of course not," she said.

"It is an idea though." He rubbed his chin. "Bunny, you know, that would be one way of finding my answers. That would be the surest way at that."

Lillian's eyes widened. "Darling, I've kept quiet most of the time when you took on work you didn't have to. I'll tell you now. You've never known this, but before Oscar asked you to collaborate on 'Sunny River' he came to me. He knew that I had been trying to get you to get some rest. He asked me whether I would object if he tried to get you to work with him on a new show. I didn't object, Bunny. By then I could see what lack of occupation was doing to you. I urged Oscar to do everything in his power to get you to do the show. I'm telling you this so you won't think I'm just trying to tell you what I've been telling you for years, to rest more.

"But this is altogether different. I thought the strain of a radio show once a week was more than you should have undertaken. And now all this additional activity for the associations and unions—all of them full of worries and responsibilities and troubles. But at least you had a cause there. Then the entertainment for the troops. That probably is most tiring of all, but you

have a cause there too. But now this idea, organizing an orchestra, taking the whole responsibility on your shoulders, all the worries. For what? Why do you have to do it, Bunny? And especially now when the world is in such a state?"

"It's an opportunity to find out once and for all whether I belong in a museum or whether I'm still alive," he replied. He took her hand. "Try to understand, Bunny. For years I've wondered about myself, about other composers like me, about the people we think we are writing for. Are there any such people? I've been told I'm a has-been, that I ought to go off somewhere and raise petunias. Well, maybe I ought to. But I have to find out first."

"You have found out," she argued. "You've played for thousands of men in service and you know what they think of your music."

He laughed softly. "They *had* to like it, Bunny. With all their officers around them, what could they have done if they hadn't liked it? Boo? And get court-martialed? No, they *seemed* to like it. But that test lacks scientific accuracy. What I have to do is go out to the people in this country and offer them my music—at a price, in competition with the kind of music everybody tells me is the music America wants. That's the kind of test I have to make."

"I thought you were not thinking about it seriously," she said. "Bunny, we're neither of us as young as we were once. That kind of experiment is all right for someone twenty years younger than you are." She was fighting a losing battle and she knew it.

He snorted. "I've got more energy now than I had twenty years ago. It's not my body that's running down. It's my spirit! If I am an oldtimer I ought to find it out once and for all and get myself accustomed to the idea. I ought to stop thinking about writing music and acting like I'm still alive! Listen to me, Bunny, if this thing turns out to be a bust I'll quit. I'll quit for good. We'll go back to California and I'll retire. I'll be one of the grand old men of music. Young composers can come to me for advice. I'll settle

down. I'll even learn how to play croquet. But I've got to find out, first."

She tried her last argument. "And what about your concerts for the servicemen?"

"This tour will be for a couple of weeks, no more. I'll still be able to do the war stuff." Now he rose and began to walk up and down the room. "What possibilities this has. I'll hire young singers, not broken down warhorses, but unknowns. I'll give them their chance. Let young people sing their songs, my songs. The music will be the test, not the singer. There are young artists around, good ones, who never get a chance to show what they can do. I'll give them their chance—and they'll give me my answers. If it goes over it won't be because the singer is a star who could put anything over."

"This may cost you a fortune," she said, beaten.

"Oh, hell, I can sign a contract with any studio on the coast tomorrow if I want to. I'm not worried about money. What I'm worried about is whether twenty-five years of hard work has gone down the drain."

2.

He gave Squires the green light and the booking agent turned loose his own furious energy. In short order he booked a tryout tour of six concerts to start in October.

Romberg hired forty-one musicians. He combed the field for men he knew, who could play his kind of music the way he wanted it to be played. That was itself a backbreaking job. Along with all other manpower shortages, good musicians were scarce, but he got what he wanted. His goal was not too ambitious. His music was not to be serious music; more than anyone he knew his own limitations. He did not regard himself as a serious conductor. But he knew what he wanted, a kind of almost-forgotten grace in

music, a nostalgia, a sweetness that, for want of a better description, might be called Viennese. He didn't want his listeners on the edges of their seats in excitement; instead, he wanted them to half-close their eyes and lose themselves in reverie.

He was able to locate his old contractor from broadcasting days, the efficient Edward Rubsam, who knew Romberg so well that the difficulties of the task were cut in half immediately.

Romberg hired four young soloists—unknowns as he had promised: two girls and two young men—and he instructed them patiently in the kind of singing he wanted. He explained his program to the orchestra players and the singers, explained why he chose each number, what the number was to do, its own place in the program.

He started with a light overture by von Suppé or Offenbach to touch off the spark. Then a waltz, or perhaps, if he thought it more suitable, a Sousa march. Music belonging to youth. Then the coloratura would sing a familiar operatic aria, such as the 'Bell Song' from 'Lakmé,' or the famous aria from 'Traviata.' And, right after these musical pyrotechnics, turn to an old beloved song, 'Alice Blue Gown' perhaps.

Then the orchestra was given its chance. Music by Chopin or Tschaikowsky, and then, perhaps, a Debussy number, 'Clair de Lune.' And follow that immediately, to snap the mood, with a light one-step from a popular show.

The baritone then would appear and sing the 'Prologue' from 'Pagliacci,' and after that some lighter numbers. The first half of the program would be concluded with the first Romberg music of the concert, arrangements from 'The Student Prince,' 'The Desert Song,' perhaps 'Blossom Time.'

For the second half of the program there would be no pretense of anything serious. This would be the festive part of the show. He would recall from the past familiar touchstones of remembered days. The horrors and agonies of the present war-crazed

day would be banished briefly by waltzes by Lehar and Strauss, selections by Gershwin, Kern, Herbert. Toward the end of this part of the program a grand piano would be wheeled out on the stage, and then Romberg would try to take his audience to his heart. He planned to speak to them, to try to tell them what he was doing, to play odds and ends of his own music, while his singers stood around informally and sang.

He arranged the seating of the orchestra to suit himself. Instead of conducting from the center of the stage, with his back to the audience, he set his podium on the right side of the stage, and in that position he could control his musicians and at the same time watch the audience and keep in touch with them. He remembered how the conductors in the little Viennese cafes always turned and looked at their listeners, and the rapport that existed. That was what he had to find, capture, hold: a community of feeling, a link between his listeners and himself.

He would let the august aloofness of the serious conductors remain where it belonged, with serious men who interpreted serious music. What he wanted was the atmosphere of the cafe, the wine cellar, the beer garden. It would be perfect, he thought, if his listeners could munch food and drink beer while he played for them.

He opened in the Lyric Theatre in Baltimore on the night of October 20, 1942. After the weeks of work the opening itself came almost as a letdown. Even the indomitable Squires had almost been beaten by the difficulties of arranging a concert tour for a full orchestra during a war. Transportation, hotel rooms, schedules, all of them complicated enough in normal times, had proved almost insurmountable difficulties. Trains were virtually all running behind schedules, and all possible contingencies had to be foreseen.

On opening night Romberg closed the door of his dressing room, lit a cigarette, sat down. There was nothing left to do now

but to submit himself, and the music he stood for, to the people. This time he was wholly alone, not only financially, but in concept. He had not been hired by a radio sponsor, he had not merely contributed music to a show or picture. This time, everything, from the music he had chosen, the singers he had chosen, to the orchestra he had chosen, was his own. If he stood or fell he would be alone.

He walked out onto the stage. There was a polite applause. The house was half-empty. He began his program. The audience was friendly, it seemed, but not enthusiastic. They clapped dutifully after each number and when the female singers appeared there were a few appreciative whistles.

Something was missing again. It couldn't be the music. He was playing music America had taken to its heart for many years. Victor Herbert was a national possession. The audience was not displeased, but there was something lacking.

At the end of the first half of the program he swept his orchestra into his own music for the first time, a concert arrangement of 'The Desert Song' made by Don Walker. By then he had come almost to believe that Lillian had been right, that even Teddy Lawrence had been right. Perhaps he was bucking a tide that was too strong for him. The orchestra went into the 'Riff Song' and then he caught something, a rustling, an excitement, and at that moment the audience burst into a spontaneous applause.

He turned his head slowly, and looked at the faces he could see. There was a new excitement in them and it was communicated to him and he began to tingle. The orchestra now played 'Blue Heaven' and he heard the sigh, the concerted sigh, and it seemed to him that the faces looked different. He choked and turned his head away and his eyes filled with salt, and then the orchestra started the lovely music of 'One Alone' and he felt naked and exposed.

It was not that his music was better than any that had preceded

it; if anything, perhaps, it was not to be compared with some of the music he had played. But at that moment, when the orchestra started to play 'The Desert Song,' it was as though that was what his listeners had come to hear. At that moment there was established the rapport he sought.

He could scarcely wait for the moment when he would speak to them. The piano was rolled out and he sat down before it. The lights were dimmed. A single spot found him. There was a burst of applause, and then silence. Then he played the haunting melody, 'When I Grow Too Old to Dream.' He had no concert skill after all these years. But he played the music with the kind of emotion he had drawn from his singers and his musicians. When he was finished, the house broke down.

He pulled the microphone toward him. The house lights went on. He looked at the faces before him and he said: "As you know, this is the first concert in my first concert tour. You are the first audience I have tried to bring this music to. There are a great many things I could say now. It is a strange kind of music and it doesn't fit a definition. It isn't highbrow music and it isn't lowbrow music. Perhaps it might be called 'middlebrow' music. I don't pretend to be a conductor. There are many people who say I ought not pretend to be a composer.

"But I have had a long time with music, other composers' music and my own, and there is a certain kind of music that doesn't belong in the head, or in the legs, but instead, in the heart. That is the kind of music I am trying to bring to you. I don't want you to feel that you have to be wearing your best manners. React the way your heart dictates. If the music bores you, you know what to do, hiss, boo, stamp your feet. Even walk out. If the music, on the other hand, makes you feel that you are a little younger, a little happier, that the world is not quite the miserable places it appears to be today, then take it to your hearts."

He waited a moment or two, and then said: "I have been told

that the music I have lived with for many years now belongs to the past. They tell me I am as oldfashioned as kerosene lamps and hansom cabs and old lace and crinoline, and that the kind of romance I think of belongs to cavaliers and ladies, to men on horses and women in ivory towers, to costumes and ancient days. They tell me today is the day of radio and telephone and airplanes and fast cars and that life has speeded up so fast no one can slow down to a waltz. Perhaps that is so. If so, they are right and I am wrong. But if some of the lovely music you have listened to tonight and will listen to again when I've finished this rambling talk, if this music has touched you and made you remember that life was livable once and that it will be again, then *I* am right—and *they* are wrong."

3.

When the tour was ended and the figures were added up he was appalled at the money he had lost. Lillian pleaded with him to quit and return to California.

"No, Bunny," he said. "You should have seen their faces. They came to me after the concerts, backstage, in my dressing room. They told me they had had no idea of what I was trying to do. If they had, they said, if other people had, the houses would have been filled. They pleaded with me to come back again and they promised the next time there would be no empty seats. No, Bunny, it's not quite over yet."

He went out on a second tour just before Christmas, and between times returned to his war entertainment. He went on a third tour in the spring. On these tours he frequently brought his entertainers to nearby military and naval hospitals. The schedule, with wartime railroad delays, was a nightmare. They were scheduled to play, for instance, in Atlanta on May 30, a matinee performance. They also agreed to give a benefit concert at the

Larsen General Hospital, outside the city, right after the concert. The troupe left Birmingham at nine in the morning and were due in Atlanta at noon. The train did not get into Atlanta until after two. The musicians had just time enough to get to the theatre for the concert. The concert ended at five-thirty. Station wagons, buses, and a big army truck were waiting outside to rush them and their instruments to the hospital. There was no time for dinner and Romberg hastily ordered sandwiches and coffee for everyone, to be consumed while riding.

At the hospital it was discovered the recreation hall was too small to house the orchestra. Romberg suggested that the concert be given on the lawn, outdoors. Lamps were collected and strung out on the grass. Planks were put down for the men to sit on; other patients were wheeled out in beds and chairs. Those who could not be taken from the wards were brought to the nearest windows. At eight-thirty in the moonlight the orchestra started to play. The men never played better. The singers never sang as well. When the music was over the medical officer in command of the hospital thanked the troupe. "That was the best medicine my patients have had in months," he said. "Thank you."

It was not until midnight that the troupe got to the hotel and for the first time that day got a hot meal.

As the weeks passed he became more and more assured on the stage. He began to banter lightly with his audiences. He developed little gestures that amused them. During a march he would lower his baton, shrug his shoulders, and look at the audience as though to say, "They don't need me, they're doing fine themselves." He swayed and danced on the podium during waltzes. To bring up a crescendo he would swing his arm in a wide arc as though he were conjuring the music out of space. To quiet the orchestra he would wave his hands like a magician.

It was corny. The audiences loved it. The critics, to whom con-

ducting was a serious thing, attacked him unmercifully. The audiences loved that too. The critics, trained to regard music and the conducting of it as a sacred rite, fit for a kind of musical priesthood, were furious at his casualness. He explained again and again, in interviews, on radio programs, that he was not trying to compete with serious musicians and did not want to be judged on that basis. It was useless. Most critics considered he was defiling a tradition. He thought, at last, the hell with it. He was not playing music for critics.

4.

He returned to his hotel apartment in New York on a hot night late in spring after giving a concert at an army camp. He loosened his tie and unbuttoned his shirt and sat down heavily. Lillian, waiting up for him, asked, "How did it go?"

"Wonderful, Bunny. I could play for those boys all night."

"You look so tired."

"I am tired." He lit a cigarette. "Any calls?"

"Harry Squires called."

"What did he want? My tours are all finished."

"I don't know. He called while I was out. He left word for you to call him back no matter when you returned."

"First a shower. And when I get out of the shower I'm sure I'll find a nice cold drink waiting. Then I will call Harry Squires."

Later, drink in hand, cool, he called the agent. She listened. "No," he said. Then he said, "I couldn't." He listened some more. "Well, I'll sleep on it and call you tomorrow. But I tell you now that I couldn't do it."

When he hung up, Lillian said: "If that was more concert work he was trying to persuade you to do I'm glad you were so definite about refusing. Bunny, I want to go back to California. We have a home there."

"Lillian," he said. "Do you know what Squires wanted?"

"No. But I could tell it was more work. I'm glad you said no."

"The management at Robin Hood Dell in Philadelphia has invited me to conduct two open-air concerts there this summer."

"Well, I'm glad you told him you couldn't do it. You told him before that with the fifteen-week tour starting in September you had to rest a little this summer. What's the matter with that man?"

"Bunny," he said softly. "I don't think you quite understand. They don't want me to bring my own orchestra into the Dell. They want me to conduct the Philadelphia Symphony."

In a very small voice, a few moments later, she said, "Oh."

He rubbed his chin. "My God, what a notion! To conduct the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra! I wonder who came up with that idea."

Now she was bristling. "Well, I don't see why not. Why shouldn't they want you to conduct the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra?"

"Lillian, Lillian, I'm not a serious conductor. The Philadelphia Symphony is one of the greatest orchestras in the world. Those boys are used to Stokowski and Ormandy. What the hell would Romberg be doing standing in front of those babies and giving them the beat?"

"A musician is a musician," she said. "You've told me that a hundred times."

"I know, Bunny, but these are a little different. Can you imagine what my critical friends would say if I attempted to conduct that orchestra? Romberg with delusions of grandeur! No. Harry must be crazy even to suggest it. Why the people who go to Robin Hood Dell for those concerts are serious music-lovers. They want the great classics, classically conducted. They don't want Romberg with his Viennese schmaltz. No, Harry will have to tell them I can't accept."

She stood up. Her eyes flashed angrily. "I'm going to call

Harry Squires this minute and tell him you're going to accept."

"Bunny, I don't understand. You just said a few minutes ago that you were glad I told Harry I couldn't take this on. Are you really asking me to accept?"

"I certainly think you're good enough to conduct that orchestra."

"Bunny, Bunny."

"Well, I mean it!"

"Okay," he said. "I'll swallow the bait. But you better get out of the way if this thing flops." Then he said, quietly, "Come here and give me a kiss."

5.

He accepted the offer and regretted it immediately. When the news appeared in the papers he tried to avoid anyone he knew. He was convinced he was guilty of incredible temerity in agreeing to stand before that eminent body of musicians. His own handpicked gang—that was one thing. But the Philadelphia Symphony! What orders could he give to men who listened normally to Eugene Ormandy, who had been trained for years by Leopold Stokowski, who had followed the batons of the greatest conductors in the world? And what would the people think, the people who came to the Dell to listen to good music, the kind of good music he had been insisting all along was not his dish?

When he faced the orchestra for the first rehearsal he looked over the vast aggregation and then, in a spontaneous gesture, he grinned, rubbed his chin, and moved his head slowly from side to side.

"Gentlemen," he said, "for a reason I don't yet understand, the management has the idea that putting you and me together will make something. I couldn't see it, but anyway, here I am. According to the contract I'm supposed to conduct here twice this

summer, although after the first time they probably will be happy to forget the second time. Now, gentlemen, I want to start off by telling you that I have so much respect for your ability that I'm almost afraid to lift a stick in front of you. I won't try to tell you how to play anything because you could tell me. For our first program I've assembled a little light music, Viennese, American —you know, the kind of stuff I always play. All I want you to do is to relax a little. It is relaxing music. You all could play it on sight. It's easy. So just relax and maybe the audience will relax and maybe it won't be too bad."

On the evening of the concert he waited in his dressing room and offered a short prayer: "Please, please, Lord, please don't make me look too ridiculous."

As he started the concert he could sense the musicians *were* enjoying themselves. Lillian was right, he thought. Musicians are musicians and they are their own world but in that world they are the same. When the concert was over and the people who had come back to his dressing room to shake his hand and ask for his autograph had departed, he looked at her and asked, "Well, Bunny?"

Her eyes were wet. "It was beautiful," she whispered.

"Was it?"

"I was very proud of you, Bunny."

The next morning the Philadelphia newspapers announced that he had broken the record for attendance at the summer concerts in Robin Hood Dell. The *Inquirer* put the figure at 14,500 persons.

The record at the Dell was broken another time that summer. That was for his second concert there.

6.

The concert tour in the fall of 1943 opened in Carnegie Hall on September 18. While he was assembling his orchestra for the tour he had been notified by the musicians' union that the scale had been raised twenty-five per cent. His answer was that, despite the increase, he was going to enlarge his orchestra from forty-one to fifty-five musicians. He added another soloist, making five. He picked his girls carefully and was so particular about details that he had special dresses designed for them. He had begun, in the concerts, to wisecrack, "I know a good voice when I *see* it," and that depended on the beauty of the girl who walked on to make it funny.

Carnegie Hall was sold out three days before concert time and he played to standees in the venerable hall. For the first time now, in the tour that followed, which took him to new places, Minneapolis, Winnipeg, Denver, as far south as New Orleans, he started to show profits. Nightly grosses rose steadily and he remembered what so many persons had told him in the beginning, during the first days of his tours, "If we had only known what you were going to do, so many of our friends would have come." The word had got around, he thought.

Attendance records were broken in city after city. In Providence he played to more than 8000 persons; in Kansas City more than 9000 persons came to listen; in Atlanta, 10,000 persons; in St. Paul, 15,000 persons. It was as though the pot, heating slowly, now had boiled over everywhere.

When he returned to New York he was informed by a jubilant Squires that not only had the tour showed a profit, but a profit so great that it had wiped out all the heavy losses of the first three tours.

He brought this news to Lillian, saying: "It took a little doing,

Bunny, to lose so much the first, second, and third time, giving so much satisfaction to my pals around town and then to go out and try a fourth time. It took a little doing, but by God it paid off!"

"All right, Bunny," she said now. "It paid off. You have proved your point. The people like you, they'll pay to hear you, you can break records. Now quit! You may have forgotten, Bunny, but we have a home, somewhere. Let's go to it. You've found your answers now, let's go home."

"Well, of course," he said very slowly.

"Do you mean we will go, Bunny!"

"Of course. But it will make the Victor people madder than hell."

"What Victor people?"

"I was going to surprise you. I just signed a contract with the RCA-Victor Company to make four albums of records."

XXV

When he entered the room and saw her face he knew that she had found out. He kissed her heartily and whistled as he removed his coat. "What I need is a cold shower," he said briskly. "Then let's go out to the Island somewhere and get dinner. We'll find a nice cool place."

"We'll talk first," she said.

"All right, Bunny. What shall we talk about? The weather? The weather is hot."

"We'll talk about this little item in the paper about you writing a new show."

"Oh that. Didn't I tell you?"

"No, you didn't tell me. First the concerts, then the phonograph records, although when you're going to be able to make records with this Petrillo strike on I don't know. But I could understand that. You made me understand. I've tried to understand, haven't I, Bunny?"

"Yes," he said, "you have, Lillian."

"But why a new show? Oh, darling, haven't you been hurt enough?"

"You don't think I can write a hit show anymore?"

"I'm not saying that," she said swiftly.

"But you think it," he said. "Everybody thinks it."

"I just don't want you to get hurt," she said in a small voice.

He lit a cigarette. "Yes, Bunny," he said, "I've agreed to write the music for a new show. Dorothy Fields telephoned me weeks ago and asked me whether I would be interested. At first I didn't think I would be. At first I thought the way you are thinking now, could I do it? I thought, don't stick your neck out. I thought, remember the last five shows.

"Then I asked myself, what have these months of concert work actually proved? They proved that people liked my music, liked music that was like mine, that people love sentimental music. I found that out, all right. But that music of mine, Bunny, was music I had written years ago, years and years ago. And the more I played it the more I wondered whether it had died out of me for good." He leaned forward. "Remember, Bunny, I'm not an orchestra leader, I'm not a radio star. I'm a *composer*. What the hell is all this success, what does it mean, if I still can't write? I've been making a great success lately—but on my reputation. On a reputation I made years ago.

"But once upon a time I used to write music. It was a long, long time ago. All this concert and radio and phonograph work doesn't mean anything, *if I can't still write music.*"

"What kind of a show is this going to be?" she asked after a long while.

"Thank God it's an American subject. Dorothy and her brother, Herbert, have written an original book that is truly inspiring. And Dorothy has some ideas for lyrics that have me jumping up and down. It's set in New York in the 1890's. We're going to call it 'Up in Central Park.' "

Epilogue

THE day after Christmas in 1947 was to become known in New York as the first day of the terrible snow.

They stood at the window and watched the thick swirling flakes. He held her tightly and their breath made the window milky and below them the white city vanished in the snow.

"I always love to see snow," he said. "It reminds me of Belisce when I was a child. I remember coming home for my Christmas vacations and how the streets would be piled high and how small the village looked, closed in by winter. On New Year's Day my father would order out the sleigh, pulled by two horses with little bells around their necks, and we would all pile in and cover ourselves with blankets and visit our friends. Other sleighs would pass us and we would sing out to each other and sometimes a sleigh would turn over in the snow."

He turned from the window and took out a cigarette from a box on a table. "How we still huddle from the snow," he said. "With everything, we still huddle inside from the snow. Even in a hotel on Park Avenue."

They sat down in the dark room. He lit the cigarette slowly. It was very quiet.

"It's been a long life, from Belisce to here," he said. "Maybe it won't be considered wasted altogether. Maybe I have done something. I landed alone in this country and have stood on my own two feet ever since. I had friends, certainly, but my friends couldn't do much for me, no matter how much they wanted to. After all, my friends could fill a theatre the first night, perhaps, but they couldn't be there every night after that and what I did had to make its own way."

She was almost lost in the semi-darkness of the room. Outside the fall became heavier.

"You get a great satisfaction out of your tours, don't you, Bunny?" she asked. "Just what gives you the biggest kick?"

"The people who come backstage afterward," he said, "either to shake hands or ask me to sign programs, young singers perhaps, with their parents, asking for advice. You know, the most difficult thing I have to do is to refuse to listen to them sometimes when they want to sing for me. I can't make them understand how limited my time is. Sometimes I can arrange for an audition in the hotel, or before or after the concert. There are a few who have made a little success, because of me. I like to think so."

Their conversation wandered. He recalled the war years and the concerts, the hundreds and hundreds of concerts, for the public and for the service people. "You know, Bunny," he said, "so often, in order to make those appearances at a hospital or a camp, we had to start out early in the morning, my singers and I, ahead of the orchestra. We needed private cars. Usually it was impossible to hire cars because of gas rationing. But almost without fail I succeeded in getting a private car. And do you know from whom? From the local undertaker! There usually was someone in town who knew the mortician, and one of the black seven-passenger limousines would be placed at our disposal and we traveled as mourners. Once, on the road, I remember we passed through a village and slowed down and the driver turned around

and said, 'There's an inspector. Everybody look sad!' I pulled out a handkerchief and held it to my eyes and as we passed the man he looked at us and nodded in sympathy."

He was silent for a while. "You know, Bunny," he said, "I'm very proud of one thing. I've given more than five hundred concerts and I have established a trademark—'An Evening with Sigmund Romberg.' In concert halls and on the air. Now, after all these years, I have a following all over the country who know what that means."

"And now what?" she asked. "You have written shows and you have written for the movies and you are giving concerts from one coast to the other and you are broadcasting over the air and you make recordings. That makes the cycle that you have striven for. You have conducted orchestras like the Philadelphia Symphony and the Minneapolis Symphony and the Detroit Symphony. You've conducted the New York Philharmonic in Lewisohn Stadium. You were half-dead with worry that you couldn't write a hit show anymore and you turned out 'Up in Central Park,' and with fourteen months in New York and playing on the road and made into a movie that should have been hit enough even for you. What more can you do? You're going to give more concert tours and because of that and because of your work with the SPA we now spend half our time in New York and I suppose that will go on. But what more can you do?"

Slowly he rose. He turned on the television set. In a few minutes two men were boxing on the screen. "Look, Bunny," he said. "There's a blizzard outside and here on this screen you can watch a prizefight from Madison Square Garden."

She closed her eyes in resignation.

He flipped off the switch. "I remember many years ago when I was a little boy and my mother and father brought me to Osiek to start school there. In the evening there was a military tattoo. I've never forgotten that sight, the officers and their ladies, the

soldiers, the uniforms, the torches, and the music. It was medieval, Bunny, a carryover from the Middle Ages. And here," he tapped the television screen, "is television. From a barbaric tattoo in Osiek to television. It's been a long life, Bunny."

He suddenly turned on the lights in the room. He leaned down and kissed her.

"What else can I do? There's a lot to do! Concerts on television. How would you like to see Australia? How about England, France, South America? I've played from coast to coast, how about an international concert tour?"

"When, Bunny, do we start?"

He kissed her again. Then he walked to the window. "Just as soon as it stops snowing."

LIST OF SHOWS AND MUSICAL NUMBERS WRITTEN BY SIGMUND ROMBERG

THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on January 10th, 1914.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

COME ON IN, THE DANCING'S FINE
NOBODY WAS IN LOVE WITH ME
THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD
THE AMBER CLUB
A DANCING ROMEO
A COLLEGE BOY
LIFE'S A DRESS PARADE
HELLO, LITTLE MISS U.S.A.
THE DANCE OF THE FORTUNE WHEEL
THE AMERICAN MAXIXE
WHAT'LL
MY CLEOPATRA GIRL
ALL ABOARD
EVERYBODY MEANS IT WHEN THEY SAY GOODBYE
A LOVELY TRIP
THE VISIT
EARLY HOURS OF THE MORN
WHY DON'T YOU GET A MAN LIKE ME?
THE WHIRL OF THE OPERA
OH, ALLAH
THE PAVLOVA GAVOTTE
DANCE ECCENTRIC
DANCE EXTRAORDINAIRE
RAGTIME ARABIAN NIGHTS

Published by the Winter Garden Co.

THE MIDNIGHT GIRL, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the 44th Street Theatre, on February 23rd, 1914.—Lyrics by Edward A. Paulton.

COME BACK TO THE OLD CABARET
HONEYMOON LAND
THE MIDNIGHT CABARET
ON THE LOVELY LAGOON
OH, YOU JOHN
GOODNIGHT LOVE

Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on June 10th, 1914.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Harry Carroll.

WORKING FOR THE PICTURES
THE MAUDE ADAMS OF THE SCREEN
THE MIDNIGHT GIRL AT THE MIDNIGHT CABARET

THE SARI DANCE
KITTY MACKAY
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE BETTER
THE MOVING PICTURE GLIDE
DIVERTISSEMENT
OMAR KHAYAM
DREAMS OF THE PAST
WAY DOWN EAST
THE CRINOLINE GIRL
EUGENIC GIRLS
THE GIRL OF TODAY
ON A MODERN WEDDING DAY
BOHEMIAN RAG
THE SLOPING PATH
DON'T HESITATE WITH ME
IMPRESSIONS
THE GRAPE DANCE
YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH US
CALIFORNIA

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Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.

DANCING AROUND, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, On October 10th, 1914.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Harry Carroll.

THE ARMY CLUB
NEVER TRUST A SOLDIER MAN
MY RAINBOW BEAU
MY LADY OF THE TELEPHONE
DANCE ECCENTRIQUE
THE SHEPHERD GAVOTTE
THE CALL OF THE COLORS
SILHOUETTE BALLET
SOMEBODY'S DANCING WITH MY GIRL
OH, YOU JOHN
AN AFTERNOON TEA
A FASHION SLAVE
DANCE CONCEPTIONS
VENETIA
THE VENETIAN CARNIVAL
HE IS SWEET, HE IS GOOD
BUYING LITTLE THINGS FOR ME
FADING GIRL
GRAND CANAL
MAYBE LAND
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME?
THE WORLD'S A STAGE FOR EVERY GIRL

Published by the Winter Garden Co.

MAID IN AMERICA, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on February 18th, 1915.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Harry Carroll.

THE TYPICAL OPENING CHORUS
MADE IN THE U.S.A.
HERE'S A BALE OF COTTON FOR YOU
HAVE A RESTAURANT OF YOUR OWN
THE GIRLIE FROM THE CABARET
IT IS ALL FOR YOU
THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING ON BROADWAY
MANHATTAN MAD
EVERYONE'S MOVING UPTOWN
THE STOLEN MELODY
THERE WAS A TIME
GARDEN OF PARADISE
OH, THOSE DAYS
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE'S HEART
CASTLES IN THE AIR
DIANA
SISTER SUSIE'S STARTED SYNCOPATION

Published by Harms, Inc.

HANDS UP, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the 44th Street Theatre, on July 22nd, 1915.—Lyrics by E. Ray Goetz.

ORANGE GIRL
GINGER GIRL
I'M SIMPLY CRAZY OVER YOU
CLING A LITTLE CLOSER
TING-A-LING
IT'S A CLUE
THE LEVEE ALONG BROADWAY
THE BEST LITTLE SWEETHEART OF ALL
OPENING OF ATLANTIC CITY
SUMMERY TIME
HOW DO YOU DO, GOODBYE
ESMERELDA
WAY DOWN ON HONOLULU BAY
PIRATE RAG
TANGO TEA
TIFFANY GIRL

Published by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder

THE BLUE PARADISE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Casino Theatre, on August 5th, 1915.—Lyrics by Herbert Reynolds.

AUF WIEDERSEHEN
WE WISH YOU A PLEASANT JOURNEY
I'M FROM CHICAGO
A TOAST TO WOMAN'S EYES
ONE STEP INTO LOVE
MY MODEL GIRL
TELL THE TOWN HELLO TONIGHT
WHY ARE WE INVITED HERE

Published by G. Schirmer

List of Shows and Musical Numbers

A WORLD OF PLEASURE, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on October 14th, 1915.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

THE GOOD FELLOWS CLUB
FIFTH AVENUE
THE DANCE OF THE MIDNIGHT SONS
THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
IN MY WAR AGAINST MEN
MISS INNOVATION
GIRLIES ARE OUT OF MY LIFE
I'LL MAKE YOU LIKE THE TOWN
DANSE ECCENTRIQUE
JAPANESE BALLET
I COULD GO HOME TO A GIRL LIKE YOU
DOWN IN CATTYCORNER
SYNCOPATION
AT THE TOY SHOP
DANCE OF THE SQUAREHEADS
THE JIGAREE
MARK ANTHONY
THE DOLL DANCE
REMINISCENT OF ROSY POSY
FLIGHTS OF FANCY
MECHANICAL SOLDIERS
THE MELTING POT
THE RAGTIME PIPES OF PAN
IN ARABIA
THE WOP CABARET
THE GIRL OF THE FAN
TAKE ME HOME
I PLAYED MY CONCERTINA
FASCINATION
THE GREATEST BATTLE SONG OF ALL
RAGTIME CARNIVAL
THE DANCING FESTIVAL
POLO RAG

Published by G. Schirmer

RUGGLES OF RED GAP, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Astor Theatre, on December 25th, 1915.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

MARCONIGRAM
LUSTSPIEL
MEMORIES
CHIN-CHIN
SING A SONG OF LOVE
EIGHT BELLS
TULIPS AND PANSIES
MILITARY MAID
EVERYBODY HUM WITH ME
WHEN THE COLORED REGIMENT GOES OFF TO WAR

Published by G. Schirmer

ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR., presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on February 17th, 1916.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—James Hanley.

SIMPLE LIFE
GALLOP SOME
WHEN YOU'RE STARRING IN THE MOVIES
DANCE A LITTLE MORE
NOW HE'S GOT A GIRL
MAYFLOWER GIRL
HAPPY HOTTENTOTS
MY VOODOO LADY
FAST STEPPERS
DON'T BE A SAILOR
SAILOR'S FLING
PIRATE LADY
ROBINSON CRUSOE
SPINNING A YARN
THE SPANISH BALLET
HUNTER FOX-TROT BALL
A DANCE
MINSTREL DAYS
BRING ALONG YOUR LOVING WAYS

Published by G. Schirmer

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1916, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on June 22nd, 1916.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Otto Motzan.

WINE, WOMEN AND SONG
RAGGING THE APACHE
SO THIS IS PARIS
VIOLIN SOLO
PLAY MY MELODY
SWEET AND PRETTY
HOW TO MAKE A PRETTY GIRL
AROUND THE TOWN
LET CUPID IN
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU
OLYMPIAN BALLET
ANY NIGHT ON BROADWAY
ROMEO AND JULIET
RAGTIME CALISTHENICS

Published by G. Schirmer

A GIRL FROM BRAZIL, presented by the Messrs. Shubert, at the 44th Street Theatre, on August 30th, 1916.—Lyrics by Matthew Woodward.

THE FINANCIAL VIKING
CHILDHOOD DAYS
I WANT TO BE A ROMEO
STOLEN KISSES
DARLING I LOVE YOU SO
IVY AND OAK

THE RIGHT BRAZILIAN GIRL
THEN LOVE WILL COME
COME BACK SWEET DREAM
OH, YOU LOVELY LADIES
HEART TO HEART
BACHELOR GIRL AND BOY
SKI-ING
MY SENORITA
SOME DAY
LIKE THE FJORDS OF SCANDINAVIA

Published by G. Schirmer

THE SHOW OF WONDERS, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on October 26th, 1916.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborators—Otto Motzan and Herman Timberg.

BACK TO NATURE
WEDDING BELLS
WHEN PAVLOVA STARTS BUCK AND WINGING
HICKI DO
GIRLS PREPARE
BRING YOUR KISSES TO ME
ANGELS
ALLADIN
GIRLS ON THE SQUARE
LOUISIANA
PYJAMA GIRLIE
GET A GIRLIE
A BURMESE BALLET
MENDELSSOHN AND LISZT
NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY
WEDDING BY THE SEA
DISBOLO
MEDLEY OF SONG
ITALIAN BALLET MINIATURE
SLAVLOVA
ZOO
LOVE IS LIKE A BUBBLE

Published by G. Schirmer

FOLLOW ME, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Casino Theatre, on November 29th, 1916.—Lyrics by R. B. Smith.

WE ALWAYS TAKE THEM HOME
A TETE A TETE WITH YOU
THE GIRLS ARE GETTING WISER
ADAM WAS THE ONLY LOVER
I AM TRUE TO ALL
HONEYMOON LAND

Published by Jerome H. Remick & Co.

HER SOLDIER BOY, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Astor Theatre, on December 6th, 1916.—Lyrics by Rida Johnson Young.

MOTHER
FAIRY SONG
ALL ALONE IN A CITY OF GIRLS
HOME AGAIN
HE'S COMING HOME
SONG OF HOME
I'D BE HAPPY WITH YOU ANYWHERE
GOLDEN SUNSHINE
AMSTERDAM
KISS WALTZ
RAGTIME FIGHT
THE ARMY
MARRIED MAN MAKES THE BEST SOLDIER

Published by G. Schirmer

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917, presented by the Winter Garden Co. at the Winter Garden Theatre, on April 26th, 1917.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Otto Motzan.

FATHER KNICKERBOCKER
THE PASSING SHOW
SAME OLD SONG
FASTER AND FASTER
WON'T YOU WRITE TO ME?
MEET ME AT THE STATION
DANCING FAMILY
PIERROT
MY BEDOUIN GIRL
ORGY
THE GOLDEN WEST
COLLEGE BOYS DEAR
UNDER THE WILLOW TREE
MY YOKAHAM GIRL
THE TELEPHONE GIRL
LANGUAGE OF THE FAN
A TABLE FOR TWO
THE GIRL WHO DRINKS CHAMPAGNE
RING OUT LIBERTY BELL
WON'T YOU BE MY DADDY

Published by G. Schirmer

MY LADY'S GLOVE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Lyric Theatre, on June 18th, 1917.—Lyrics by Edgar Smith.

OFFICER OF THE 25TH
KEEP REPEATING IT
I'LL HATE TO LEAVE THE BOYS
FOOLISH LITTLE MAIDEN, I
THE FICKLE SEX
DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

DO BUY SOME CANDY, SIR
DON'T GO AWAY
LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Published by Leo Feist, Inc.

MAYTIME, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Shubert Theatre, on August 16th, 1917.—Lyrics by Rida Johnson Young.

IN OUR LITTLE HOME SWEET HOME
IT'S A WINDY DAY AT THE BATTERY
GYPSY SONG
WILL YOU REMEMBER (SWEETHEART)
JUMP JIM CROW
THE ROAD TO PARADISE
SPANISH DANCE
REMINISCENCE
SELLING GOWNS
DANCING WILL KEEP YOU YOUNG
ONLY ONE GIRL FOR ME
GO AWAY GIRLS

Published by G. Schirmer

DOING OUR BIT, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on October 16th, 1917.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Herman Timberg.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS
MR. RAG AND I
SWEETIES
DOING MY BIT
LET HER GO
PHANTOM OF YOUR SMILE
FASHION SHOW
FESTA
DANCE, DANCE, DANCE
SALLY
FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY
COLONIAL BALLET
OLD FASHIONED GIRLS
FINE FEATHERS
PERFECT JEWELS
ROSES
HELLO MISS TANGO

Published by G. Schirmer

OVER THE TOP, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the 44th Street Roof Theatre, on November 28th, 1917.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

FROCKS AND FRILLS
POSTERLAND
THE GLADIATOR DANCE
THAT AIRSHIP OF MINE
OH, GALATEA
GOLDEN PHEASANT
ALGERIAN GIRL
THE JUSTINE JOHNSON RAG
OH JUSTINE

Published by G. Schirmer

SINBAD, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on February 18th, 1918.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Al Jolson.

ON CUPID'S GREEN
A LITTLE BIT OF EVERY NATIONALITY
OUR ANCESTORS
A THOUSAND AND ONE ARABIAN NIGHTS
BEAUTY AND BEAST
BAGDAD
THE RAG LAD OF BAGDAD
A NIGHT IN THE ORIENT
I HAIL FROM CAIRO
LOVE AHOY

Published by G. Schirmer

FOLLOW THE GIRL, presented by Raymond Hitchcock and E. Ray Goetz, at the 44th Street Roof Theatre, on March 2nd, 1918.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

EVER BY YOUR SIDE
HONEYMOON LAND

Published by G. Schirmer

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918, presented by Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on July 25th, 1918.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Jean Schwartz.

I CAN'T MAKE MY FEET BEHAVE
WAR STAMPS
MY BABY TALKING GIRL
GO WEST YOUNG GIRL
MY VAMPIRE GIRL
SQUAB FARM

SERENADE
BRING ON THE GIRLS
MY HOLIDAY GIRL
GALLI CURCI RAG
MY DUCHESS OF THE LONG AGO
DRESS, DRESS, DRESS

Published by Jerome H. Remick & Co.

THE MELTING OF MOLLY, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Broadhurst Theatre, on December 30th, 1918.—Lyrics by Cyrus Wood.

DANCING SCHOOL
DARLING
REMINISCENCE
BILLIE
DEAR OLD GOWN
JAZZ HOW I LOVE TO HEAR IT
LODGER
WEDDING BY PROXY
JAZZ ALL YOUR TROUBLES AWAY
OH DOCTOR, DOCTOR
YOU WIN
FLOATING DOWN A MOONLIGHT STREAM
YOU REMEMBER ME
ROLLING EXERCISE
BRIDESMAIDS
I WANT MY HUSBAND WHEN I'M WED

Published by Shapiro, Bernstein & Co.

MONTE CRISTO, JR., presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert, at the Winter Garden Theatre, on February 12th, 1919.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Jean Schwartz.

JUST MY TYPE
SENTIMENTAL KNIGHTS
MI LADY'S DRESS
BROADWAY BUTTERFLY
MILITARY GLIDE
STEPPING OUT TONIGHT
MONTE CRISTO
MARSEILLES
GIRL IN EVERY PORT
WOMAN AND LIGHT
TOY DANCE
JAZZ MARIMBA
JEWEL BALLET
FESTIVE NIGHTS
VAMPIRE DANCE
CARNIVAL TIMES
EMPEROR DAYS
SUGAR BABY
COME BACK TO ME
THERE'S A WORLD OF BEAUTY IN YOU

Published by Jerome H. Remick & Co.

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1919, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert, at the Winter Garden Theatre, on October 23rd, 1919.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

SO LONG SING SONG
KISS BURGLAR
DREAMY FLORENCE

Published by Jerome H. Remick & Co.

THE MAGIC MELODY, presented by Wilner and Romberg, at the Shubert Theatre, on November 11th, 1919.—Lyrics by Frederic Arnold Kummer and Alex Gerber.

LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND
GIANINA
LIPS, LIPS, LIPS
TWO'S COMPANY, THREE'S A CROWD
I AM THE PASHA
MELODY OF DANCE
DANCE ECCENTRIC
NIGHT OF LOVE
DOWN BY THE NILE
THERE ARE NO LIPS SO SWEET AS YOURS
HONEYMOON LAND
DANCE ORIENTALE
WE ARE THE FIXERS
DREAM GIRL GIVE BACK MY DREAM
MELODY OF DANCE
WE TAKE IT JUST TAKE IT FROM YOU
THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER
ONCE UPON A TIME
WHEN YOU'RE IN WITH THE RIGHT LITTLE GIRL
YOU KNOW AND I KNOW

Published by M. Witmark & Sons

POOR LITTLE RITZ GIRL, presented by Lew Fields at the Central Theatre, on July 27th, 1920.—Lyrics by Alex Gerber. Collaborator—Richard C. Rodgers.

PRETTY MING TOY
I LOVE TO SAY HELLO
WHEN I FOUND YOU
IN THE LAND OF YESTERDAY
THE BOMBAY BOMBASHAY

Published by M. Witmark & Sons

LOVE BIRDS, presented by Wilner and Romberg at the Apollo Theatre, on March 15th, 1921.—Lyrics by Ballard Macdonald.

LET'S PRETEND
THE TROUSSEAU INCOMPLETE
CAN MACY DO WITHOUT ME?
TWO LITTLE LOVE BIRDS
FAT FAT FATIMA
IS IT HARD TO GUESS?
GIRL LIKE GRANDMA
MURRAYISMS
ROONEYISMS
I LOVE TO GO SWIMMIN' WITH THE WIMMIN'
LITTLE DREAM THAT LOST ITS WAY
PERSIANA
WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY

Published by M. Witmark & Sons

BLOSSOM TIME, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Ambassador Theatre, on September 29th, 1921.—Lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly. Based on Franz Schubert melodies.

MELODY TRISTE
THREE LITTLE MAIDS
SERENADE
MY SPRINGTIME THOU ART
SONG OF LOVE
LOVE IS A RIDDLE
LET ME AWAKE
TELL ME DAISY
ONLY ONE LOVE EVER FILLS THE HEART
KEEP IT DARK
LONELY HEARTS

Published by Karczag Publishing Co.
(Leo Feist, Inc., Selling Agent)

BOMBO, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Jolson Theatre, on October 6th, 1921.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge and Buddy DeSylva.

LIFE IS A GAMBLE
IN THE LAND OFF THERE
SLEEPY VILLAGE
NO ONE LOVES A CLOWN
ROSE OF SPAIN
WAIT UNTIL MY SHIP COMES IN
BYLO BOY
THROUGH THE MIST
WETONA
ANY PLACE WILL DO WITH YOU

BOMBO

OH, OH COLUMBUS
VERY NEXT GIRL I SEE

Published by Sunshine Music Co.

THE BLUSHING BRIDE, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Astor Theatre, on February 6th, 1922.—Lyrics by Cyrus Wood.

LOVE'S HIGHWAY
I'LL BET ON ANYTHING BUT GIRLS
A REGULAR GIRL
THE TICK, TICK, TICK OF THE TICKER
GOODBYE
CAZZAZA
MR. AND MRS.
THE SILVER WEDDING
BAD LITTLE BOY AND GOOD LITTLE GIRL
THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES
ROSY, POSY
SPRINGTIME
PATTER
DIFFERENT DAYS
THE BLUSHING BRIDE

Published by M. Witmark & Sons

THE ROSE OF STAMBOUL, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert, at the Century Theatre, on March 7th, 1922.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

MY HEART IS CALLING
LOVEY DOVE
ROSE OF STAMBOUL
TING-A-LING
MAZUMA
TIME, ONLY TIME DEAR
WALTZ IT SHOULD BE

Published by Tams Music Publishing Co.

THE LADY IN ERMINE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert, at the Ambassador Theatre, on October 2nd, 1922.—Lyrics by Cyrus Wood.

WHEN HEARTS ARE YOUNG
CHILDHOOD DAYS
PLAY WITH FIRE
FOLLOW YOU ALL OVER THE WORLD

Published by Harms, Inc.

SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Broadhurst Theatre, on October 26th, 1922.—Lyrics by Harry B. Smith and Cyrus Wood.

LOVE WHILE YOU MAY
LOVE FINDS A WAY
PRETTY POLLY
SAILOR'S BRIDE
STARLIGHT OF HOPE
SI, SI, SENORITA
JUST LIKE A DOLL
BUT IN BRAZIL
YOUTH AND SPRING
THERE MAY BLOOM A ROSE FOR ME

Published by Harms, Inc.

DANCING GIRL, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert, at the Winter Garden Theatre, on January 24th, 1923.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

LUCKY IN LOVE
ANY LITTLE GIRL WILL FALL
HAIL U.S.A.
THAT AMERICAN BOY OF MINE
TRINI
WHY AM I SAD?
WHAT HAVE YOU TO DECLARE?
THE BOWERY OF TODAY
MY LOVE BOUQUET
I'M A DEVIL WITH THE LADIES
I'VE BEEN WANTING YOU
VERSAILLES
PANGO, PANGO
THAT ROMANCE OF MINE
CUDDLE UP
PLAY ME A TUNE
SPANISH DANCE
VENETIAN

Published by Harms, Inc.

CAROLINE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Amsterdam Theatre, on January 31st, 1923.—Lyrics by Harry B. Smith.

TELLING FORTUNES
THE MAN IN THE MOON
HELLO, HELLO
LAND OF ENCHANTMENT
WILLOW O' THE WISP
SWEETHEART
SHOULDER ARMS
LOVE'S LAST DAY

Published by Harms, Inc.

DEW DROP INN, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Broadhurst Theatre, on May 17th, 1923.—Lyrics by Cyrus Wood.

PRETTY ANKLE
WE TWO
MEN
THE PRIMROSE PATH
GOODBYE FOREVER
MOONLIGHT WALTZ
LADY
I'M A FLAPPER

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1923, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on June 14th, 1923.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

ROSE OF THE MORNING
LOVELIT EYES
LOTUS FLOWER
THE BALL BEGINS

Published by Harms, Inc.

INNOCENT EYES, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on May 20th, 1924. Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Jean Schwartz.

WE ARE PURITANS
I LOVE THE BOYS
A LESSON IN LOVE
LOLITA
GARDEN OF LOVE
LOVE IS LIKE A PINWHEEL
DAY DREAMS
FAN NUMBER
FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH
ORGANDIE DAYS
SEXTETTE
TAKE ME

Published by Harms, Inc.

MARJORIE, presented by Rufus R. LeMaire and Richard W. Krakaur, at the Broadhurst Theatre, on August 11th, 1924.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

TWILIGHT ROSE
FORTY SECOND STREET MOON
MARJORIE

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE DREAM GIRL, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Ambassador Theatre, on August 20th, 1924.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge.

ALL YEAR 'ROUND
BROAD HIGHWAY
I WANT TO GO HOME
BUBBLES
MAKE LOVE IN THE MORNING
SAXOPHONE MAN
THE BROADWAY KNITTING CLUB

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924, presented by the Messrs. Lee and J. J. Shubert at the Winter Garden Theatre, on September 3rd, 1924.—Lyrics by Harold Atteridge. Collaborator—Jean Schwartz.

JOY AND GLOOM
THE BEADED BAG
EVERYBODY DANCE
WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER
DUBLINOLA
A STUDY IN PORCELAIN
VENEZIA
MOOCHING ALONG

Published by Harms, Inc.

ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Astor Theatre, on October 15th, 1924.—Lyrics by Clifford Grey and Sam Coslow.

ARTISTS AND MODELS
TOMORROW
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL FACE WILL DO
OO LA, LA
THE MIRAGE
CHARM
PULL YOUR STRING
GOOD NIGHT
OLD FASHIONED TIN TYPES
SIRENS OF THE SEA

TOMORROW'S ANOTHER DAY
MANNERS AND MOTIONS
THE LILY POOL
ALWAYS THE SAME
UNDER A PARASOL

Published by Harms, Inc.

ANNIE DEAR, presented by Florenz Ziegfeld, at the Times Square Theatre, on November 4th, 1924.—Lyrics by Clifford Grey.

COME TO MY PARTY
I WANT TO BE LOVED
BERTIE
WHISPER TO ME
RADIO VOICES
LOUISIANA

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE STUDENT PRINCE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert, at the Jolson Theatre, on December 2nd, 1924.—Lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly.

BY OUR BEARING SO SEDATE
GOLDEN DAYS
GARLANDS BRIGHT
DRINKING SONG
TO THE INN WE'RE MARCHING
YOU'RE IN HEIDELBERG
WELCOME TO PRINCE
DEEP IN MY HEART, DEAR
SERENADE
FARMER JACOB
STUDENT'S LIFE
FAREWELL DEAR
WALTZ ENSEMBLE
JUST WE TWO
GAVOTTE
WHAT MEMORIES

Published by Harms, Inc.

LOUIS THE 14TH, presented by Florenz Ziegfeld, at the Cosmopolitan Theatre, on March 3rd, 1925.—Lyrics by Arthur Wimperis.

MARKET DAY
LITTLE PEACH
HOMELAND
WAYSIDE FLOWER
REGIMENTAL BAND
TAKING A WIFE
LITTLE BLUE PIG
SCHOE PLATTLER TANZ

PEP
EDELWEISS
RIN-TIN-TIN
CELEBRATION OF SAINT JOAN THE GOOD
THE MAJOR DOMO
FOLLOW THE RAJAH
I'M HAROLD, I'M HAROLD
FINALETTO
MOON FLOWER
VAMP YOUR MAN
CROSSWORD PUZZLE
DON'T LET ANYBODY VAMP YOUR MAN
GIVE A LITTLE, GET A LITTLE KISS
MY FIRST LOVE LETTER
TRUE HEART
SWEETHEART OF MINE

Published by Harms, Inc.

ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1925, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Astor Theatre, on June 24th, 1925.—Lyrics by Clifford Grey.

MOTHERS OF THE WORLD

Published by Harms, Inc.

PRINCESS FLAVIA, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Century Theatre, on November 2nd, 1925.—Lyrics by Harry B. Smith.

YES OR NO
ON COMRADES
MARIONETTES
WHAT CARE I
CONVENT BELLS ARE RINGING
I DARE NOT LOVE YOU
BY THIS TOKEN
DANCE WITH ME
TWILIGHT VOICES
ONLY ONE
INTERMEZZO
I LOVE THEM ALL
IN RURITANIA
KERMASS DANCE

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE DESERT SONG, presented by Lawrence Schwab and Frank Mandel at the Casino Theatre, on November 30th, 1926.—Lyrics by Otto Harbach and Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

RIDING SONG OF THE RIFFS
MARGOT
I'LL BE A BUOYANT GIRL
WHY DID WE MARRY SOLDIERS
FRENCH MARCHING SONG
ROMANCE
THEN YOU WILL KNOW
I WANT A KISS
IT
THE DESERT SONG (BLUE HEAVEN)
SONG OF THE BRASS KEY
ONE GOOD MAN GONE WRONG
EASTERN AND WESTERN LOVE
LET LOVE GO
ONE FLOWER IN YOUR GARDEN
ONE ALONE
THE SABRE SONG
FAREWELL
LET'S HAVE A LOVE AFFAIR

Published by Harms, Inc.

CHERRY BLOSSOMS, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Lyric Theatre on March 28th, 1927.—Lyrics by Harry B. Smith.

I'LL PEEK-A-BOO YOU
LEGEND SONG
IF YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK
FEAST OF THE LANTERNS
CIGARETTE SONG
HAPPY RICKSHAW MAN
JAPANESE SERENADE
I WANT TO BE THERE
ROMANCE
PIT SOLO
'NEATH THE CHERRY BLOSSOM MOON
WITHIN THE LAND OF GEISHAS
THE WOOLWORTH OF JAPAN
MY OWN WILLOW TREE
SOME DAY
WAIT AND SEE

Published by Harms, Inc.

MY MARYLAND, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Jolson Theatre, on September 12th, 1927.—Lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly.

STROLLING WITH THE ONE I LOVE BEST
MR. CUPID
WON'T YOU MARRY ME?
SCHOTTISCHE
YOUR LAND AND MY LAND
THE SAME SILVER MOON
THE MOCKING BIRD
STRAWBERRY JAM
MEXICO
SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW
OLD JOHN BARLEYCORN

SONG OF VICTORY
KER-CHOO
BOYS IN GRAY
COUNTRY DANCE
MOTHER
INTERMEZZO
BONNIE BLUE FLAG
HAIL STONEWALL JACKSON

Published by Harms, Inc.

MY PRINCESS, presented by Alfred E. Aarons, at the Shubert Theatre, on October 6th, 1927.—Lyrics by Dorothy Donnelly.

THE STEPPE SISTERS
THE MOULIN ROUGE GIRLS
THE GLORIOUS CHASE
THE HUNTING DANCE
GIGOLO
I WONDER WHY
FOLLOW THE SUN TO THE SOUTH
WHEN I WAS A GIRL LIKE YOU
HERE'S HOW
DEAR GIRLS, GOODBYE
EVIVA
OUR BRIDAL NIGHT
MY PASSION FLOWER
MY MIMOSA
PRINCE CHARMING

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE LOVE CALL, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Majestic Theatre, on October 24th, 1927.—Lyrics by Harry B. Smith.

TONY, TONY, TONY
'TIS LOVE
WHEN I TAKE YOU ALL TO LONDON
BONITA
EYES THAT LOVE
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT
THE RANGER'S SONG
THE LARK
GOOD PALS
POKER GAME
I AM CAPTURED
HERE THE TRUMPET CALL
I LIVE I DIE FOR YOU
YOU APPEAL TO ME
FIESTA
SPANISH LOVE

Published by Harms, Inc.

ROSALIE, presented by Florenz Ziegfeld, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, on January 10th, 1928.—Lyrics by P. G. Wodehouse.

HERE THEY ARE
ENTRANCE OF HUSSARS
HUSSAR MARCH
WEST POINT BUGLE
WEST POINT MARCH
KINGDOM OF DREAMS
THE KING CAN DO NO WRONG
SETTING UP EXERCISES
ABDICATION
WHY MUST WE ALWAYS BE DREAMING?

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE NEW MOON, presented by Lawrence Schwab and Frank Mandel, at the Imperial Theatre, on September 19th, 1928.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

DAINTY WISP OF THISTLEDOWN
GORGEOUS ALEXANDER
MARIANNE
THE GIRL ON THE PROW
AN INTERRUPTED LOVE SONG
TAVERN SONG
SOFTLY AS IN A MORNING SUNRISE
STOUTHEARTED MEN
TANGO
ON TRIAL
ONE KISS
WANTING YOU
A CHANTY
FUNNY LITTLE SAILOR MAN
LOVER COME BACK TO ME
LOVE IS QUITE A SIMPLE THING
TRY HER OUT AT DANCING
LIAR
'NEATH A NEW MOON
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES

Published by Harms, Inc.

NINA ROSA, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Majestic Theatre, on September 20th, 1930.—Lyrics by Irving Caesar.

PAY DAY
PABLO
NINA ROSA
WITH THE DAWN
PAYADOR
THE SECRET IN MY LIFE
YOUR SMILES, YOUR TEARS
SERENADE OF LOVE
PIZZARO WAS A VERY NARROW MAN
A KISS I MUST REFUSE YOU

LATIGO
ARRIVAL OF GUESTS
TANGO
MY IDEA OF A WIFE
MY FIRST LOVE, MY LAST LOVE
YOUR ROSE
THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE FOR ME
ADORED ONE

Published by Harms, Inc.

EAST WIND, presented by Lawrence Schwab and Frank Mandel, at the Manhattan Theatre, on October 27th, 1931.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

WONDERFUL WORLD
EAST WIND
I SAW YOUR EYES
THESE TROPICS
CONGAI
WEDDING SCENE
ARE YOU LOVE
YOU ARE MY WOMAN
MINNIE
EMBRACE ME
THE AMERICANS ARE COMING
I'D BE A FOOL
REGARDEZ MOI
WHEN YOU ARE YOUNG
YOUNG MAN IN LOVE

Published by Fifth Ave. Music Corp.

MELODY, presented by George White, at the New Casino Theatre, on February 4th, 1933.—Lyrics by Irving Caesar.

OUR LITTLE LADY UPSTAIRS
MELODY
I'D WRITE A SONG
GOOD FRIENDS SURROUND ME
ON TO AFRICA
I AM THE SINGER, YOU ARE THE SONG
IN MY GARDEN
RENDEZVOUS
POMPADOUR
THE WHOLE WORLD LOVES
GIVE ME A ROLL ON THE DRUM
TONIGHT MAY NEVER COME AGAIN
NEVER HAD AN EDUCATION

Published by Harms, Inc.

ROSE DE FRANCE, presented by Maurice Lehmann, at the Theatre de Chatelet, Paris, on October 23rd, 1933.—Lyrics by Albert Willemetz.

BARON DE RAGOTIN
CHANT DES GALLERIENS
FRIVOLETTE
MA BELLE PETRONILLA
POUR FAIRE LE TOURNEDOES
POUR SE FAIRE ADORER
POUR VIVRE AUPRES VOUS
QUAND LES SOLDATS VONT AU PAS
ROSE DE FRANCE
SUR LA MER IMMENSE

Published by Societe Anonyme Francaise Chappell

MAY WINE, presented by Lawrence Schwab at the St. James Theatre, on December 5th, 1935.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

SOMETHING IN THE AIR OF MAY
INTERLUDE IN A BARBER SHOP
A CHANSON IN THE PRATER
A DOLL FANTASY
YOU WAIT AND WAIT AND WAIT
I BUILT A DREAM
DANCE, MY DARLING
ALWAYS A GENTLEMAN
SOMEBODY OUGHT TO BE TOLD
SOMETHING NEW IS IN MY HEART
ONCE AROUND THE CLOCK

Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.

FORBIDDEN MELODY, presented by Jack Kirkland and Sam H. Grisman, at the Amsterdam Theatre, on November 2nd, 1936.—Lyrics by Otto Harbach.

BUCHAREST
JUST HELLO
MOONLIGHT AND VIOLINS
LADY IN THE WINDOW
TWO LADIES AND A MAN
YOU ARE ALL I'VE WANTED
WALTZ FANTASIES
HOW COULD A FELLOW WANT MORE
NO USE PRETENDING
HERE THE GYPSIES PLAYING
SHADOWS
WHEN A GIRL FORGETS TO SCREAM
BLAME IT ALL ON THE NIGHT

Published by Robbins Music Corp.

SUNNY RIVER, presented by Max Gordon, at the St. James Theatre, on December 4th, 1941.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

MY GIRL AND I
CALL IT A DREAM
IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE
THE BUTTERFLIES AND THE BEES
ALONG THE WINDING ROAD
BUNDLING
CAN YOU SING
MAKING CONVERSATION
LET ME LIVE TODAY
BOW-LEGGED SAL
SUNNY RIVER
THE DUELLO
SHE GOT HIM
TIME IS STANDING STILL

Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.

UP IN CENTRAL PARK, presented by Mike Todd, at the Century Theatre, on January 27th, 1945.—Lyrics by Dorothy Fields.

UP FROM THE GUTTER
CAROUSEL IN THE PARK
IT DOESN'T COST YOU ANYTHING TO DREAM
BOSS TWEED
WHEN SHE WALKS IN THE ROOM
CURRIER AND IVES
CLOSE AS PAGES IN A BOOK
RIP VAN WINKLE
THE FIREMAN'S BRIDE
WHEN THE PARTY GIVES A PARTY
MAYPOLE DANCE
THE BIG BACK YARD
APRIL SNOW
THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.

MY ROMANCE, presented by the Messrs. Shubert at the Shubert Theatre, on October 19th, 1948.—Lyrics by Rowland Leigh.

SOUVENIR
1898
DEBUTANTE
WRITTEN IN YOUR HAND
MILLEFLEURS
LOVE AND LAUGHTER
FROM NOW ONWARD
LITTLE EMMALINE
DESIRE
POLKA
IF ONLY
BELLA DONNA
PARADISE STOLEN
IN LOVE WITH ROMANCE

Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.

LIST OF FILMS AND MUSICAL NUMBERS WRITTEN BY SIGMUND ROMBERG

FOOLISH WIVES (silent picture), presented by Universal Pictures, in 1923.

COMPLETE ORIGINAL SCORE FOR ORCHESTRA.

VIENNESE NIGHTS, presented by Warner Brothers, in 1930.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

YOU WILL REMEMBER VIENNA
I BRING A LOVE SONG
HERE WE ARE
REGIMENTAL MARCH
VIENNESE NIGHTS

Published by Harms, Inc.

CHILDREN OF DREAMS, presented by Warner Brothers in 1931.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

CHILDREN OF DREAMS
OH, I COULDN'T LOVE THAT GIRL
FRUIT PICKERS SONG
OPERA NUMBER
GOODBYE MY LOVE, GOODBYE
SLEEPING BEAUTY
HER PROFESSOR
THAT RARE ROMANCE
YES SIR

Published by Harms, Inc.

THE NIGHT IS YOUNG, presented by Metro Goldwyn Mayer in 1934.—Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, 2nd.

THE NIGHT IS YOUNG
MY OLD MARE
WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM

Published by Robbins Music Corp.

List of Films and Musical Numbers

THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST, presented by Metro Goldwyn Mayer in 1938.—Lyrics by Gus Kahn.

BRAND NEW SONG IN TOWN
GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST
MARIACHIE
SENORITA
SHADOWS ON THE MOON
SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE
SUN-UP TO SUNDOWN
WEST AIN'T WILD ANYMORE
WHO ARE WE TO SAY
WIND IN THE TREES

Published by Leo Feist, Inc.

THEY GAVE HIM A GUN, presented by Metro Goldwyn Mayer, in 1939. —Lyrics by Gus Kahn.

LOVE SONG OF LONG AGO
WHERE ELSE BUT HERE

Published by Leo Feist, Inc.

UP IN CENTRAL PARK, presented by Universal-International Pictures in 1948.—Lyrics by Dorothy Fields.

OH SAY CAN YOU SEE (Additional number written specially for the film)

Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.

LIST OF SINGLE NUMBERS WRITTEN BY SIGMUND ROMBERG

MEMORIES	Published by M. Witmark & Sons
SOME SMOKE (DE LA FUMEE)	Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.
LE POEME (THE POEM)	Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.
LEG OF MUTTON (LE GIGOT)	Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.
VALSE PARFUMEE	Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.
FOR YOU	Published by M. Witmark & Sons
THERE'S A RIOT IN HAVANA	Published by Robbins Music Corp.
THEME (Broadcasting Signature)	Published by Sigmund Romberg
GO SOUTH YOUNG MAN	Published by Harms, Inc.
LIKE A STAR IN THE NIGHT	Published by Harms, Inc.
DEVIL IN DISGUISE	Published by Harms, Inc.
LAST WALTZ WITH YOU	Published by Harms, Inc.
KEEPER OF THE IVORY KEYS	Published by Harms, Inc.
RHYTHM OF ROMANCE	Published by Harms, Inc.
MIST ON THE MIRROR	Published by Harms, Inc.
FAREWELL TO DREAMS	Published by Robbins Music Corp.
AMERICAN HUMORESQUE	Published by Robbins Music Corp.
FAITHFULLY YOURS	Published by Harms, Inc.
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU	Published by Harms, Inc.
TAKE EVERYTHING, BUT LEAVE ME YOU	Published by Harms, Inc.
CHINESE LULLABYE	Published by Robbins Music Corp.
OFF THE SHORES OF SOMEWHERE	Published by Chappel & Co. Inc.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF SONGS BY SIGMUND ROMBERG AND THE PRODUCTIONS FOR WHICH THEY WERE WRITTEN

Abdication (*ROSALIE*)
Adam Was the Only Lover (*FOLLOW ME*)
Adored One (*NINA ROSA*)
Algerian Girl (*OVER THE TOP*)
All Aboard (*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
All Alone in a City Full of Girls (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
All Year Around (*THE DREAM GIRL*)
Alladdin (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Along the Winding Road (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Always a Gentleman (*MAY WINE*)
Always the Same (*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Amber Club, The (*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
American Humoresque (Published by Robbins Music Corp.)
American Maxixe, The (*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Americans Are Coming, The (*EAST WIND*)
Amsterdam (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
An Afternoon Tea (*DANCING AROUND*)
Angels (*SHOWS OF WONDERS*)
Any Little Girl Will Fall (*DANCING GIRL*)
Any Night on Broadway (*PASSING SHOW OF 1916*)
Any Place Will Do with You (*BOMBO*)
April Snow (*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Are You Love (*EAST WIND*)
Army, The (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Army Club (*DANCING AROUND*)
Around the Town (*PASSING SHOW OF 1916*)
Arrival of Guests (*NINA ROSA*)
Artists and Models (*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
At the Toy Shop (*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Auf Wiedersehen (*THE BLUE PARADISE*)
Bachelor Girl and Boy (*GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Back to Nature (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Bad Little Boy and Good Little Girl (*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Bagdad (*SINBAD*)
Ball Begins, The (*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1923*)
Baron de Ragotin (*ROSE DE FRANCE*)
Beaded Bag, The (*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924*)
Beauty and Beast (*SINBAD*)
Bella Donna (*MY ROMANCE*)
Bertie (*ANNIE DEAR*)
Best Little Sweetheart of All, The (*HANDS UP*)
Big Back Yard, The (*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Billie (*MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Birds and the Bees, The (*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Blame It All on the Night (*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Blue Heaven (*Desert Song*) (*DESERT SONG*)
Blushing Bride, The (*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Bohemian Rag (*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Bombay Bombashay, The (*POOR LITTLE RITZ GIRL*)
Bombo (*BOMBO*)
Bonita (*LOVE CALL*)
Bonnie Blue Flag (*MY MARYLAND*)
Boss Tweed (*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Bowery of Today, The (*DANCING GIRL*)
Bow-Legged Sal (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Boys in Gray (*MY MARYLAND*)
Brand New Song in Town (*GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST*)
Bridesmaids (*MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Bring Along Your Loving Ways (*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Bring on the Girls (*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)

Bring Your Kisses to Me
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Broad Highway, The
(*THE DREAM GIRL*)
Broadway Butterfly
(*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Broadway Knitting Club, The
(*THE DREAM GIRL*)
Bubbles (*THE DREAM GIRL*)
Bucharest (*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Bundling (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Burmese Ballet, A
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
But in Brazil
(*SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH*)
Butterflies and the Bees, The
(*SUNNY RIVER*)
Buying Little Things for Me
(*DANCING AROUND*)
By Our Bearing So Sedate
(*STUDENT PRINCE*)
By This Token (*PRINCESS FLAVIA*)
Bylo Boy (*BOMBO*)

California
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Call It a Dream (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Call of the Colors
(*DANCING AROUND*)
Can Macy Do Without Me
(*LOVE BIRDS*)
Can You Sing (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Carnival Times
(*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Carousel in the Park
(*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Castles in the Air
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Cazzaza (*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Celebration of Saint Joan the Good
(*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Chanson in the Prater, A (*MAY WINE*)
Chant des Galleriens
(*ROSE DE FRANCE*)
Chanty, A (*THE NEW MOON*)
Charm
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Childhood Days
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Childhood Days
(*THE LADY IN ERMINE*)

Children of Dreams
(*CHILDREN OF DREAMS*)
Chin-Chin (*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Chinese Lullabye
(Published by Robbins Music Corp.)
Cigarette Song (*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Cling a Little Closer (*HANDS UP*)
Close as Pages in a Book
(*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
College Boy, A
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
College Boys, Dear
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Colonial Ballet (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Come Back Sweet Dream
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Come Back to Me
(*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Come Back to the Old Cabaret
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
Come On In, the Dancing's Fine
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Come to My Party
(*ANNIE DEAR*)
Congai (*EAST WIND*)
Convent Bells Are Ringing
(*PRINCESS FLAVIA*)
Country Dance (*MY MARYLAND*)
Crinoline Girl, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Crossword Puzzle (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Cuddle Up (*THE DANCING GIRL*)
Currier and Ives
(*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)

Dainty Wisp of Thistledown
(*THE NEW MOON*)
Dance, A (*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Dance a Little More
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Dance Conceptions
(*DANCING AROUND*)
Dance Eccentric (*MAGIC MELODY*)
Dance Eccentric
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Dance Eccentrique
(*DANCING AROUND*)
Dance Extraordinaire
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Dance, Dance, Dance
(*DOING OUR BIT*)

Dance My Darling (*MAY WINE*)
Dance of the Fortune Wheel
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Dance of the Midnight Sons
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Dance of the Square Heads
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Dance Orientale (*MAGIC MELODY*)
Dance with Me (*PRINCESS FLAVIA*)
Dancing Carnival, The
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Dancing Family
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Dancing Romeo, A
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Dancing School
(*MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Dancing Will Keep You Young
(*MAYTIME*)
Danse Eccentrique
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Darling (*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Darling, I Love You So
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Daughter of the Regiment
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Day Dreams (*INNOCENT EYES*)
Dear Girls Goodbye
(*MY PRINCESS*)
Dear Old Gown
(*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Debutante (*MY ROMANCE*)
Deep in My Heart, Dear
(*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Desert Song, The (*Blue Heaven*)
(*THE DESERT SONG*)
Desire (*MY ROMANCE*)
Devil in Disguise
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Diana (*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Different Days
(*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Disbolo (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Divertissement
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Do Buy Some Candy, Sir
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Doing My Bit (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Doll Dance, The
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Doll Fantasy, A (*MAY WINE*)
Don't Be a Sailor
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Don't Go Away (*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Don't Hesitate with Me
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Don't Let Anybody Vamp Your Man
(*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Down by the Nile
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Down in Catty Corner
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Dream Girl, Give Back My Dream
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Dreams of the Past
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Dreamy Florence
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1919*)
Dress, Dress, Dress
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
Drinking Song (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Dublinola
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924*)
Duello, The (*SUNNY RIVER*)

Early Hours of the Morn
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
East Wind (*EAST WIND*)
Eastern and Western Love
(*THE DESERT SONG*)
Edelweiss (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Eight Bells (*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Eighteen Ninety-Eight (*1898*)
(*MY ROMANCE*)
Embrace Me (*EAST WIND*)
Emperor Days (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Employment Agency, The
(*WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Entrance of Hussars (*ROSALIE*)
Esmerelda (*HANDS UP*)
Eugenic Girls
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Ever by Your Side
(*FOLLOW THE GIRL*)
Everybody Dance
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924*)
Everybody Hum with Me
(*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Everybody Means It When They Say Goodbye (*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Everyone's Moving Uptown
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)

Eviva (*MY PRINCESS*)
Eyes That Love (*THE LOVE CALL*)

Fading Girl (*DANCING AROUND*)
Fairy Song (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Faithfully Yours
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Fan Number (*INNOCENT EYES*)
Farewell (*THE DESERT SONG*)
Farewell, Dear (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Farewell to Dreams
(Published by Robbins Music Corp.)
Farmer Jacob (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Fascination
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Fashion Show (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Fashion Slave (*DANCING AROUND*)
Fast Steppers
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Faster and Faster
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Fat Fat Fatima (*LOVE BIRDS*)
Father Knickerbocker
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Feast of the Lanterns
(*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Festa (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Festive Nights (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Fickle Sex (*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Fiesta (*THE LOVE CALL*)
Fifth Avenue
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Finaletto (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Financial Viking, The
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Fine Feathers (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Fireman's Bride
(*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Flights of Fancy
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Floating Down a Moonlight Stream
(*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Follow the Rajah (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Follow the Sun to the South
(*MY PRINCESS*)
Follow You All Over the World
(*THE LADY IN ERMINE*)
Foolish Little Maiden, I
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Foolish Wives (Original Score
for Film of the Same Name)
For the Sake of Humanity
(*DOING OUR BIT*)
For You
(Published by M. Witmark & Sons)
Forty Second Street Moon
(*MARJORIE*)
Fountain of Youth (*INNOCENT EYES*)
French Marching Song
(*THE DESERT SONG*)
Frivolette (*ROSE DE FRANCE*)
Frocks and Frills (*OVER THE TOP*)
From Now Onward (*MY ROMANCE*)
Fruit Pickers Song
(*CHILDREN OF DREAMS*)
Funny Little Sailor Man
(*THE NEW MOON*)

Galli Curci Rag, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
Garden of Love (*INNOCENT EYES*)
Garden of Paradise
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Garlands Bright (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Gavotte (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Get a Girlie (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Gianina (*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Gigolo (*MY PRINCESS*)
Ginger (*HANDS UP*)
Girl in Every Port
(*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Girl Like Grandma
(*THE LOVE BIRDS*)
Girl of the Fan
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Girl of the Golden West (*THE*
GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST)
Girl of Today, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Girl on the Prow (*THE NEW MOON*)
Girl Who Drinks Champagne, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Girlie of the Cabaret
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Girlies Are Out of My Life
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Girls Are Getting Wiser, The
(*FOLLOW ME*)
Girls on the Square
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Girls Prepare (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)

Give a Little, Get a Little Kiss
(*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Give Me a Roll on the Drum
(*MELODY*)
Gladiator Dance, The
(*OVER THE TOP*)
Glorious Chase (*MY PRINCESS*)
Go Away Girls (*MAYTIME*)
Go South Young Man
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Go West Young Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
Golden Days (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Golden Pheasant (*OVER THE TOP*)
Golden Sunshine
(*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Golden West, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Good Fellows Club, The
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Good Friends Surround Me
(*MELODY*)
Goodnight
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Good Pals (*THE LOVE CALL*)
Goodbye (*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Goodbye Forever (*DEW DROP INN*)
Goodbye My Love Goodbye
(*CHILDREN OF DREAMS*)
Goodnight Love
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
Gorgeous Alexander
(*THE NEW MOON*)
Grand Canal (*DANCING AROUND*)
Grape Dance, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Greatest Battle Song of All, The
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Gypsy Song (*MAYTIME*)

Hail, Stonewall Jackson
(*MY MARYLAND*)
Hail, U.S.A. (*THE DANCING GIRL*)
Happy Hottentots
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Happy Rickshaw Man
(*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Have a Restaurant of Your Own
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
He is Sweet, He is Good
(*DANCING AROUND*)
Heart to Heart
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Hello, Hello (*CAROLINE*)
Hello, Little Miss U.S.A.
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Hello Miss Tango
(*DOING OUR BIT*)
Her Professor
(*CHILDREN OF DREAMS*)
Here the Gypsies Playing
(*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Here the Trumpet Call
(*THE LOVE CALL*)
Here They Are (*ROSALIE*)
Here We Are (*VIENNESE NIGHTS*)
Here's a Bale of Cotton for You
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Here's How (*MY PRINCESS*)
He's Coming Home
(*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Hicky Do (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Home Again (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Homeland (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Honeymoon Land (*FOLLOW ME*)
Honeymoon Land
(*FOLLOW THE GIRL*)
Honeymoon Land
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Honeymoon Land
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
How Could a Fellow Want More
(*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
How Do You Do, Goodbye (*HANDS UP*)
How to Make a Pretty Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1916*)
Hunter Fox-Trot Ball
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Hunting Dance, The
(*MY PRINCESS*)
Hussar March (*ROSALIE*)

I Am Captured (*THE LOVE CALL*)
I Am the Pasha
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
I Am the Singer, You Are the Song
(*MELODY*)
I Am True to All (*FOLLOW ME*)
I Bring a Love Song
(*VIENNESE NIGHTS*)
I Built a Dream One Day (*MAY WINE*)

I Can't Make My Feet Behave
(THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918)
I Could Go Home to a Girlie Like You
(A WORLD OF PLEASURE)
I Dare Not Love You
(PRINCESS FLAVIA)
I Hail from Cairo (SINBAD)
I Live, I Die for You
(THE LOVE CALL)
I Love the Boys (INNOCENT EYES)
I Love Them All (PRINCESS FLAVIA)
I Love to Go Swimin' with the Wimmin'
(THE LOVE BIRDS)
I Love to Say Hello
(POOR LITTLE RITZ GIRL)
I Played My Concertina
(A WORLD OF PLEASURE)
I Saw Your Eyes (EAST WIND)
I Want a Kiss (THE DESERT SONG)
I Want My Husband When I'm Wed
(THE MELTING OF MOLLY)
I Want to Be a Romeo
(THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL)
I Want to Be Loved (ANNIE DEAR)
I Want to Be There
(CHERRY BLOSSOMS)
I Want to Go Home
(The DREAM GIRL)
I Wonder Why (MY PRINCESS)
I'd Be a Fool (EAST WIND)
I'd Be Happy Anywhere with You
(HER SOLDIER BOY)
I'd Write a Song (MELODY)
If Only (MY ROMANCE)
If That's What You Want
(THE LOVE CALL)
If You Know What I Think
(CHERRY BLOSSOMS)
I'll Be a Buoyant Girl
(THE DESERT SONG)
I'll Bet on Anything But Girls
(THE BLUSHING BRIDE)
I'll Hate to Leave the Boys
(MY LADY'S GLOVE)
I'll Make You Like the Town
(A WORLD OF PLEASURE)
I'll Peek a Boo You
(CHERRY BLOSSOMS)
I'm a Devil with the Ladies
(THE DANCING GIRL)
I'm a Flapper (DEW DROP INN)
I'm from Chicago
(THE BLUE PARADISE)
I'm Harold, I'm Harold
(LOUIS THE 14TH)
I'm in Love with You
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
I'm Looking for Someone's Heart
(MAID IN AMERICA)
I'm Simply Crazy over You
(HANDS UP)
Impressions
(THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914)
In Arabia (A WORLD OF PLEASURE)
In Love with Romance
(MY ROMANCE)
In My Garden (MELODY)
In My War Against Men
(A WORLD OF PLEASURE)
In Our Little Home Sweet Home
(MAYTIME)
In Ruritania (PRINCESS FLAVIA)
In the Land of Yesterday
(POOR LITTLE RITZ GIRL)
In the Land Off There (BOMBO)
Interlude in a Barber Shop
(MAY WINE)
Intermezzo (MY MARYLAND)
Intermezzo (PRINCESS FLAVIA)
Interrupted Love Song, An
(THE NEW MOON)
Is It Hard to Guess
(THE LOVE BIRDS)
It (THE DESERT SONG)
It Can Happen to Anyone
(SUNNY RIVER)
It Doesn't Cost You Anything to Dream
(UP IN CENTRAL PARK)
It Is All for You (MAID IN AMERICA)
Italian Ballet Miniature
(SHOW OF WONDERS)
It's a Clue (HANDS UP)
It's a Windy Day at the Battery
(MAYTIME)
I've Been Wanting You
(THE DANCING GIRL)
Ivy and Oak
(THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL)

Japanese Ballet
(A WORLD OF PLEASURE)

Japanese Serenade
(*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Jazz All Your Troubles Away
(*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Jazz How I Love to Hear It
(*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Jazz Marimba (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Jewel Ballet (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Jigaree, The
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Joy and Gloom
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924*)
Jump Jim Crow (*MAYTIME*)
Just Hello (*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Just Like a Doll
(*SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH*)
Just My Type (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Just We Two (*STUDENT PRINCE*)
Justin Johnson Rag (*OVER THE TOP*)

Keep It Dark (*BLOSSOM TIME*)
Keep Repeating It
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Keeper of the Ivory Keys
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Ker-Choo (*MY MARYLAND*)
Kermass Dance (*PRINCESS FLAVIA*)
King Can Do No Wrong, The
(*ROSALIE*)
Kingdom of Dreams (*ROSALIE*)
Kiss Burglar
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1919*)
Kiss I Must Refuse You, A
(*NINA ROSA*)
Kiss Waltz, The (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Kitty Mackay
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)

Lady (*DEW DROP INN*)
Lady in the Window
(*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Land of Enchantment (*CAROLINE*)
Language of the Fan
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Lark, The (*THE LOVE CALL*)
Last Waltz with You
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Latigo (*NINA ROSA*)
Leg of Mutton (*Le Gigot*)
(Published by Joseph W. Stern & Co.)
Legend Song (*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Lesson in Love, A (*INNOCENT EYES*)
Let Cupid In
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1916*)
Let Her Go (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Let Love Go (*THE DESERT SONG*)
Let Me Awake (*BLOSSOM TIME*)
Let Me Live Today (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Let's Have a Love Affair
(*THE DESERT SONG*)
Let's Pretend (*THE LOVE BIRDS*)
Levee Along Broadway (*HANDS UP*)
Liar (*THE NEW MOON*)
Life Is a Gamble (*BOMBO*)
Life Is Just a Dress Parade
(*THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Like a Star in the Night
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Like the Fjords of Scandinavia
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
Lily Pool, The
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Lips, Lips, Lips
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Little Bit of Every Nationality
(*SINBAD*)
Little Blue Pig (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Little Church Around the Corner
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Little Dream That Lost Its Way
(*THE LOVE BIRDS*)
Little Emmaline (*MY ROMANCE*)
Little Peach (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Lodger (*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Lolita (*INNOCENT EYES*)
Lonely Heart (*BLOSSOM TIME*)
Look Before You Leap
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Lotus Flower
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1923*)
Louisiana (*ANNIE DEAR*)
Louisiana (*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Love Ahoy (*SINBAD*)
Love and Laughter (*MY ROMANCE*)
Love Finds a Way
(*SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH*)
Love Is a Riddle (*BLOSSOM TIME*)
Love Is Like a Bubble
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Love Is Like a Pinwheel
(*INNOCENT EYES*)

Love Is Quite a Simple Thing
(*THE NEW MOON*)
Love Lit Eyes
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1923*)
Love Makes the World Go 'Round
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Love Song of Long Ago
(*THEY GAVE HIM A GUN*)
Love While You May
(*SPRINGTIME OF YOUTH*)
Lovely Trip, A
(*WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Lover Come Back to Me
(*THE NEW MOON*)
Love's Highway
(*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Love's Last Day (*CAROLINE*)
Lovey Dove
(*THE ROSE OF STAMBOUL*)
Lucky in Love (*THE DANCING GIRL*)
Lustspiel (*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)

Ma Belle Petronilla
(*ROSE DE FRANCE*)
Made in the U.S.A.
(*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Major Domo, The (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Make Love in the Morning
(*THE DREAM GIRL*)
Making Conversation (*SUNNY RIVER*)
Man in the Moon, The (*CAROLINE*)
Manhattan Mad (*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Manners and Motions
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Marconigram
(*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Margot (*THE DESERT SONG*)
Mariachie
(*GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST*)
Marianne (*THE NEW MOON*)
Marionettes (*PRINCESS FLAVIA*)
Marjorie (*MARJORIE*)
Mark Anthony
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Market Day (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Married Man Makes the Best Soldier
(*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Marseilles (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Maude Adams of the Screen, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Maybe Land (*DANCING AROUND*)
Mayflower Girl
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Maypole Dance
(*UP IN CENTRAL PARK*)
Maytime (*MAYTIME*)
Mazuma (*THE ROSE OF STAMBOUL*)
Mechanical Soldiers
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Medley of Song
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Meet Me at the Station
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
Melody (*MELODY*)
Melody of Dance
(*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Melody Triste (*BLOSSOM TIME*)
Melting Pot, The
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Memories
(Published by M. Witmark & Sons)
Memories (*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Men (*DEW DROP INN*)
Mendelssohn and Liszt
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Mexico (*MY MARYLAND*)
Midnight Cabaret, The
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
Midnight Girl at the Midnight Cabaret
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Military Glide (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Military Maid
(*RUGGLES OF RED GAP*)
Millefleurs (*MY ROMANCE*)
Minnie (*EAST WIND*)
Minstrel Days
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
Mirage, The
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924*)
Miss Innovation
(*A WORLD OF PLEASURE*)
Mist on the Mirror
(Published by Harms, Inc.)
Mocking Bird, The
(*MY MARYLAND*)
Mooching Along
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1924*)
Monte Cristo (*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
Moon Flower (*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
Moonlight and Violins
(*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Moonlight Waltz (*DEW DROP INN*)

Mother (*HER SOLDIER BOY*)
Mother (*MY MARYLAND*)
Mothers of the World
(*ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1925*)
Moulin Rouge Girls, The
(*MY PRINCESS*)
Moving Picture Glide, The
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914*)
Mr. and Mrs.
(*THE BLUSHING BRIDE*)
Mr. Cupid (*MY MARYLAND*)
Mr. Rag and I (*DOING OUR BIT*)
Murrayisms (*THE LOVE BIRDS*)
My Baby Talking Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
My Bedouin Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)
My Duchess of Long Ago
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
My First Love Letter
(*LOUIS THE 14TH*)
My First Love, My Last Love
(*NINA ROSA*)
My Girl and I (*SUNNY RIVER*)
My Heart Is Calling
(*THE ROSE OF STAMBOUL*)
My Holiday Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
My Idea of a Wife (*NINA ROSA*)
My Lady of the Telephone
(*DANCING AROUND*)
My Lady's Dress
(*MONTE CRISTO, JR.*)
My Love Bouquet
(*THE DANCING GIRL*)
My Mimosa (*MY PRINCESS*)
My Model Girl
(*THE BLUE PARADISE*)
My Old Mare
(*THE NIGHT IS YOUNG*)
My Own Willow Tree
(*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
My Passion Flower (*MY PRINCESS*)
My Pirate Lady
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)
My Rainbow Beau
(*DANCING AROUND*)
My Senorita
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)
My Springtime Thou Art
(*BLOSSOM TIME*)
My Vampire Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1918*)
My Yokahama Girl
(*THE PASSING SHOW OF 1917*)

Naughty, Naughty, Naughty
(*SHOW OF WONDERS*)
Neath a New Moon (*THE NEW MOON*)
Neath the Cherry Blossom Moon
(*CHERRY BLOSSOMS*)
Never Had an Education (*MELODY*)
Never Trust a Soldier
(*DANCING AROUND*)
Night in the Orient, A (*SINBAD*)
Night Is Young, The
(*THE NIGHT IS YOUNG*)
Night of Love (*THE MAGIC MELODY*)
Nina Rosa (*NINA ROSA*)
No One Loves a Clown (*BOMBO*)
No Use Pretending
(*FORBIDDEN MELODY*)
Nobody Was in Love with Me
(*THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Now He's Got a Girl
(*ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.*)

Off the Shores of Somewhere
(Published by Chappell & Co. Inc.)
Officer of the 25th
(*MY LADY'S GLOVE*)
Oh, Allah
(*THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD*)
Oh Couldn't I Love That Girl
(*CHILDREN OF DREAMS*)
Oh Doctor, Doctor
(*THE MELTING OF MOLLY*)
Oh Galatea (*OVER THE TOP*)
Oh Justine (*OVER THE TOP*)
Oh, Oh Columbus (*BOMBO*)
Oh Say Can You See
(Additional Number for Film
UP IN CENTRAL PARK)
Oh, the Lovely Lagoon
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
Oh Those Days (*MAID IN AMERICA*)
Oh, You John (*DANCING AROUND*)
Oh, You John
(*THE MIDNIGHT GIRL*)
Oh, You Lovely Ladies
(*THE GIRL FROM BRAZIL*)

Old Fashioned Girls
(DOING OUR BIT)
Old Fashioned Tin Types
(ARTISTS AND MODELS OF 1924)
Old John Barleycorn
(MY MARYLAND)
Olympian Ballet
(THE PASSING SHOW OF 1916)
Omar Khayam
(THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914)
On a Modern Wedding Day
(THE PASSING SHOW OF 1914)
On Comrades (PRINCESS FLAVIA)
On Cupid's Green (SINBAD)
On to Africa (MELODY)
On Trial (THE NEW MOON)
Once Around the Clock
(MAY WINE)
Once Upon a Time
(THE MAGIC MELODY)
One Alone (THE DESERT SONG)
One Flower in Your Garden
(THE DESERT SONG)
One Good Man Gone Wrong
(THE DESERT SONG)
One Kiss (THE NEW MOON)
One Step into Love
(THE BLUE PARADISE)
Only One (PRINCESS FLAVIA)
Only One Girl for Me (MAYTIME)
Only One Love Ever Fills the Heart
(BLOSSOM TIME)
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